

Charles Ramble, Peter Schwieger, Alice Travers (eds)

Tibetans who Escaped the Historian's Net

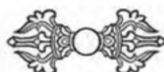
Studies in the Social History of Tibetan Societies

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Edited by

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Cover photo by Evan Yorke Nepean, September–December 1936, Frederick Spencer Chapman Collection. From *The Tibet Album.* "Tibetan porters and muleteers" 05 Dec. 2006. The Pitt Rivers Museum. Accessed 12 Nov. 2013 <http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/ photo_1998.131.204.html>

INTRODUCTION

> What was even more exciting was the street-level nature of much of the material [in the "Mutiny papers"]... petitions, complaints and requests from the ordinary citizens of Delhi—potters and courtesans, sweetmeat-makers and over-worked water carriers—exactly the sort of people who usually escape the historian's net.
>
> William Dalrymple, *The Last Moghul*

While a great deal of research remains to be done in all areas of Tibetan civilisation, certain domains have naturally received more attention than others. It requires the most cursory examination of any of the standard dictionaries to see that entries related to Buddhism, for example, vastly outnumber those belonging to such fields as divination, farming, law and administration. And yet it is surely the case that these activities have exercised the great majority of the Tibetan population far more than the arcana of high religion.

Subjects such as these have by no means been completely ignored by scholarship, but the number of researchers who have engaged with them—notwithstanding the considerable importance of some of their publications—remains very small indeed. This is the case with the field with which we are particularly concerned here: social history. Although that designation itself has featured in very few works related to Tibetan societies, there are nevertheless a number of landmark studies on aspects of this discipline that provide a foundation of prior research on which we can build, and that feature repeatedly in the bibliographies of the contributions in this volume; the door is already open, and the purpose of this collection is to push it further ajar.

The social study of Tibetan-speaking communities has traditionally been the province of anthropologists, rather than historians. Where a diachronic perspective is adopted, it is usually based on oral tradition, or on the type of quasi-historical written accounts that are themselves substantially indebted to legend. As in the case of similar studies in other parts of the world, a social history of Tibetan regions must necessarily make use of local archival material or other documents. Scholarly research on this genre of Tibetan literature is still in its infancy. The

importance of documents, where they have been accessible, for understanding how national institutions operated at a local level is illustrated by, say, Schuh's landmark study of monastic recruitment and revenues in Kyirong (Schuh 1988). Among other things, cases of this sort give an idea of the considerable local variation that existed in the operation of systems too often regarded as homogeneous. Contemporary documentary literature has also proved invaluable in shedding light on the local manifestations of the Tibetan empire (7th to 9th centuries) in its northern hinterland, as the work of Takeuchi, Uebach and Uray, among others, has shown. Nevertheless, it is also true that these studies are primarily concerned with political and economic institutions, and the people who wielded power in relatively small arenas; many social groups—ordinary villagers, for example, as well as substantial sections of the Central Tibetan elite—have still not found a voice and a place of their own in histories of Tibetan-speaking people.

The perspective of 'history from below', which owes so much to the French *Annales* school, has not yet featured prominently in historical writing on Tibetan societies. As is well known, the school has broadly favoured a focus on what would later come to be known, in Gramsci's phrase, as "subordinate" (or "subaltern") groups, in combination with methods of other disciplines such as social anthropology. (Classic studies in the genre include Le Roy Ladurie's Montaillou [1978], Carlo Ginzburg's studies of heterodoxy and witchcraft in the Friuli [1980a; 1983], and the works of Le Goff [1977, 1985].) Much of the historical writing on Tibet has tended to emphasise its centralised, national institutions, and the homogeneity of its administrative and governmental structures. An alternative perspective that has been successfully borrowed from Southeast Asia in recent times is that of the "galactic polity", whereby the provincial satellites (petty kingdoms, tribal confederacies, monastic complexes) of central entities (such as the great monastic colleges of Lhasa) themselves constituted the centres of other political constellations (Samuel 1993). The elusiveness of the identity of "Tibet" has itself formed the subject of scholarly discussion, and certain writers—notably Anne-Sophie Bentz—using theoretical apparatus developed by authors such as Rogers Brubaker, have even argued that the Tibetan nation is a creature of the diaspora that came into existence only following the flight of the Dalai Lama and his followers into exile. It is clear, in any event, that one of the most important factors in the

production of political loyalty and cultural identity has always been based on Tibetans' close association with their particular region.

The present collection is the outcome of a conference, "Recapturing the Tibetans who Escaped the Historian's Net", held in Bonn on 27–28 May 2013. Most of the authors are directly associated with the project "Social History of Tibetan Studies, 17th to 20th Centuries" (see Acknowledgements). The two exceptions, Astrid Hovden and Berthe Jansen, were invited to present papers based on their current research, which addresses themes directly relevant to the topic of the conference and to the project as a whole. As the title of the conference suggests, the broad focus of interest was provided by the kinds of "people without history" that Dalrymple saw emerging from the pages of the "Mutiny letters" preserved in the Delhi's National Archives. However, the contributions to this volume are not confined to their elusive Tibetan counterparts, but include the attitude of the central government and its organs towards its subjects, and to the analysis of some of the sources materials themselves.

While some of the papers are concerned with establishing a clearer understanding of the perspectives close to the Tibetan centre—that is, the Ganden Podrang government—during the period in question, the "centrist" position is balanced by papers that focus on "peripheral" areas: northeast Tibet (Amdo) and the Himalayas (the enclaves of Limi and Mustang in what is now Nepal, and also Sikkim, which was absorbed by India in 1975). As far as Central Tibet is concerned, the political culture is framed by the "conjunction of religious law and government" (*chos srid zung 'brel*) articulated particularly through the rule of the Lhasa-based Ganden Podrang (dGa' ldan pho brang) government (1642–1959). This political structure, with the Dalai Lama at its apex, received its final form under the overall control of the Qing imperial administration, but survived the collapse of the latter by more than four decades. The confluence of the clerical and the worldly is starkly illustrated by Berthe Jansen's presentation of the seventeenth-century guidelines (*bca' yig*) for 'Bras spungs, a warts-and-all document that reveals aspects of monastic life such as "infighting, immigration, corruption, and even the shooting dead of a monk". In spite of the pious formulation (*chos srid zung 'brel*) cited above, the religious and the secular were not always comfortable bedfellows. This is apparent from a number of accounts, such as Melvyn Goldstein's well-known study of the consolidation of clerical authority through the confiscation and

acquisition of aristocratic estates (Goldstein 1973). Without contesting that this was the general trend, Peter Schwieger nuances the picture with evidence that it was not only the aristocracy but the clergy too—in this case, the bKra shis ljongs reincarnation lineage—who were susceptible to having their estates swallowed up by more powerful monastic institutions. Provision of support for monasteries was of course not a matter of choice for the inhabitants of clerical estates in Central Tibet. Through a combination of local documents and ethnographic enquiry Astrid Hovden reconstructs the history and current operation of patronage in Limi, northwest Nepal. The villages of Limi were once gifted to the monasteries as a revenue base by a local king, but over the centuries their contributions of material support and labour have become a voluntary affair that is built into the communities' structures of household obligations.

In spite of a few landmark studies, the field of Tibetan law remains one of the most under-researched areas of Tibetan Studies. An important component of Tibetan legal procedures was—and in certain areas still is—the use of ordeals to establish guilt or innocence. Christoph Cüppers' investigation of sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's comments on ordeals reveals one of the probable reasons why law has not attracted more researchers—the sheer difficulty of the texts—while advancing our knowledge of the use of this procedure. Fernanda Pirie develops the notion that law-codes may have had some function other than a strictly legal one. In examining a corpus of Golok laws, she doubts the likelihood of their ever having been enforced, and considers instead the possibility of that they were produced by local chiefs to legitimise a social order.

The most and systematic scholarly studies of the social system under the Ganden Podrang government are provided by the work of Melvyn Goldstein although, as anthropological studies, they naturally cover only the last period of the old Tibetan government (e.g. Goldstein 1968, 1971). Goldstein's well-defined characterisation of the socio-economic structure of "old" Tibet as a form of serfdom has provoked much criticism, much of it less well justified and documented than Goldstein's position. What these accounts lack are, on the one hand, extensive and representative philological and diplomatic analyses of archived materials, which would provide a solid basis for the examination of the whole legal, administrative and bureaucratic processes involved; and on the other, analyses of material that might offer insights into earlier periods

of the Ganden Podrang. Such material has been edited and analysed extensively by Dieter Schuh, who thus established the field of diplomatics—the science of charters—within Tibetan Studies. However, the examination of such material on a larger scale as sources for a social history remains a desideratum. Studies of Tibetan history have been based almost exclusively on historiographic sources. Now that other sources are available, they too should come to form the basis of scholarly writing in order to present a more differentiated and rounded picture than we have at present. This picture can be drawn in particular by letting the primary sources speak for themselves. How vivid and fresh such a picture based on archival material can be is demonstrated by Peter Blickle's study on the history of serfdom and freedom in southwest Germany (Blickle 2003).

The importance of documents for our understanding of the lives of the Tibetan peasantry in pre-1951 Tibet is illustrated by the opening article in this collection. Discussions about this group have too often been reduced to an ideological and sterile debate on whether or not *mi ser* should be classified as serfs. Jeannine Bischoff's overview of Tibetan documents edited and published in the past forty years suggests a wealth of details in the interaction between different social groups, such as *mi ser* and their lords, *mi ser* and the central government in appealing against the excesses of their lords, as well as among *mi ser* themselves. These are the kinds of sources that provide fascinating and welcome contours to the otherwise flat landscape of Tibetan social life that is available to us.

If the Tibetan peasantry has largely escaped the historian's net, so too has practically the entire middle level of Tibetan society, to such a degree that its very existence has often been denied by writers. This astonishing lacuna, Alice Travers suggests, is the result of "a tendency to impose a medieval reading on Tibetan society and history... [that] stresses the binary opposition between farmers and landlords and tends to obliterate nuances and groups who are external to this opposition". Travers' contribution is one of the few published attempts to foreground the existence of such an "intermediate group"—merchants, the non-monastic intelligentsia and others—who had a prominent but largely unacknowledged role in Tibetan society.

The influence of the Qing administration on Tibet's socio-economic system has been almost totally neglected from the Tibetological perspective. The only monograph in this regard is Dabringhaus' study on

the Amban Song Yun (1752–1835) and his efforts to reform the Tibetan administration, tax system and military as well as controlling governmental expenditure and improving the life of Tibetan peasants. Dabringhaus' valuable study is based on source material in Chinese, especially the writings of Song Yun himself. Her landmark study can now be complemented by investigations based on primary sources in other relevant languages. Such sources, especially in Tibetan, as well as certain trilingual works in Tibetan, Mongolian and Manchu, are available among the archival material collected so far. They also include Tibetan versions of the ideas Song Yun presented to the Tibetan government. A matter that is generally overlooked when dealing with relations between Tibet and the Qing central authority is the medium of communication. Clearly, a crucial role was played by translators, but this group, too, has remained largely invisible in the writings of historians. The vicissitudes of the translation process between Manchu and Tibetan, and the possible identity of the mysterious translators themselves, are the subject of Fabienne Jagou's article. As Kalsang Norbu Gurung points out, the function of the Qing Ambans was not always very clear, but the focus of his contribution, the *Ten-Point Edict* drawn up by the abovementioned Song Yun, is testimony both to the reforming zeal of this remarkable figure and also a precious record of the parlous state of social conditions in Tibet at the time. Gurung's study anticipates a full-length translation and annotation of the Tibetan version of this important resource. Liu Yuxuan's paper underscores the importance of official Qing documents for the social history of Tibet. Of the many gazetteers of Tibet that were produced during this era, the most important—for the detail it provides about Tibet's social conditions and especially the Gorkha wars of 1788–1792—was the *Weizang tongzhi*. Liu's contribution focuses on the structure of this gazetteer, and addresses the uncertainties surrounding its authorship.

While the Himalayan areas also felt the presence of the Ganden Podrang to varying degrees, they enjoyed a substantial measure of autonomy, or else fell within the orbit of other powers. The rise of the Ganden Podrang coincided with the establishment of Sikkim's independence from Tibet; Mustang, for its part, came under the sway of Jumla and, after the late 18th century, of the Gorkhas, within the emerging state of Nepal. The rich archival collections preserved in these areas offer an invaluable resource for the examination of institutions and processes analogous to those that are known from Central Tibet. The

Sikkimese covenant (*gan rgya*) of 1830 that forms the subject of Saul Mullard's contribution is ostensibly concerned with a problem that beset Tibet's rulers at various period: the vexed issue of tax fugitives, and how to retrieve them. But as is often the case, the document carries a subtext that addresses broader concerns relating to tensions between the political centre and the periphery, as well as between the ruler and members of the country's elite. Notoriously, the voices of subordinate groups generally go unheard, and even when they are documented it is almost invariably through the filter of the official record. In the concluding contribution, Charles Ramble presents certain archives of southern Mustang that provide a rare example of "hidden transcripts" (in James Scott's phrase): the discussions and resolutions of subordinate communities who recorded the strategies they adopted against their oppressors in documents that they kept concealed from outside view.

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RIGHT THERE BUT STILL UNNOTICED: INFORMATION ON DGA' LDAN PHO BRANG *MI SER* FROM ARCHIVAL MATERIAL PUBLISHED IN GERMAN(Y)

JEANNINE BISCHOFF

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most important lessons that history is able to teach us is that it belongs to those who do not escape the historian's net: in other words, those whose documents and sources survive and are systematically studied. In this paper I will show how much can be deduced on Central Tibetan *mi ser* based on archival sources that have been published within the last forty years in edited versions.[1] This will provide food for reflection on Tibetan society in general and on *mi ser* as the majority of the Tibetan population in particular. *Mi ser* have served as a subject of study before. Major research on the subject was carried out by Melvyn C. Goldstein decades ago. The question whether to translate *mi ser* as serf has been debated at length between him and Beatrice D. Miller in the *Tibet Journal* (1986–1989).[2] So, why is there a need for further research on *mi ser*? The work done so far has been mainly based on interviews with contemporary witnesses, not taking into account archival source material. There is apparently a natural discrepancy between memory and documentary evidence. Combining the two may not provide a full description of a time period or a social stratum like *mi ser*, but it will at least fill some of the empty spaces that are still left.[3] The aim of social history in itself is to expand the subjects of his-

[1] *Mi ser* in this paper will be defined as the majority of the inhabitants of Tibet during the dGa' ldan pho brang period in contrast to the aristocracy and clergy. The term does include all the statuses a *mi ser* might have, including *khral pa* (tax payer), *dud chung* (small households), *mi bogs* (literally "human lease"), *mi rtsa* (a person belonging to someone), etc. For further explanations of the various statuses of *mi ser*, see for example Melvyn C. Goldstein (1971a and b, 1986, 1987, 1989).

[2] See the bibliography for the references.

[3] I am currently writing my PhD thesis on the topic of *mi ser*, dependents of a monastic estate during the dGa' ldan pho brang period. My work is mainly based on archival material, but does of course also take into account the existing studies on

torical study, develop new sources for information, as well as re-use sources in new ways (Stearns 1994: viii). It can be used as a corrective of other approaches on history writing, such as political history or history of ideas by redefining the past, opening up different perspectives on groups of people and their range of social patterns and behaviour. The edited archival source material used for this paper mainly originates from what Dieter Schuh has collected during his travels to India and Nepal in the 1970s. It covers the whole scale of public and private acts, as well as documents with little or no juridical bearing: charters, decrees, legal agreements, letters, registers, requests, inventories, and so forth. Schuh published them mainly in the 1970's and 1980's since when they have been available to the scientific community.[4] In 2012 Hanna Schneider published two volumes of Tibetan documents, with special emphasis on private legal acts (Schneider 2012a and b). These sources are accompanied by two translations: one of a public act by Helga Uebach (2007), and the other of a list of memoranda (*dran tho*) by Christoph Cüppers (1999).

For the historian, documents are sources that provide an account of historical events and change, whereas for the diplomatist the document itself is the result and the mirror of a historical act (Schuh 1983: 303). By presenting these sources in edited and to some extent also translated versions, the authors have made "[...] them communicate once more, resonantly and unmistakably" (Boyle 1992: 90). One of the first steps among the subsequent tasks is to go beyond translation to the interpretation of some of the information provided on *mi ser*. To achieve this, I have systematically gone through the available editions and translations and have then categorised them by relations within society, from lower towards higher levels, as well as on the same social level. This is followed by a brief demographic study providing quantitative information in addition to the particular events and processes described in documents relating to single persons or small groups of people.

Tibetan society. It is hoped that this will expand certain areas of what we already know about *mi ser* and enable us to revise others.

[4] See the bibliography for a list of works on diplomatics related to the dGa' ldan pho brang period by Dieter Schuh.

THE INTERRELATIONS OF *MI SER* WITH LEGAL AUTHORITIES

Immediately after the dGa' ldan pho brang government had come into being a list of tasks to bear in mind (*dran tho*) for district officials was created as an appendix to the law code *Zhal lce bcu gsum*, issued by Gushri Khan and the first regent bSod nams chos 'phel in 1643.[5] Examples of correct, fair, and law-abiding behaviour towards the households within the *rdzong* are explicitly stressed on several occasions in order to restore social order after 1642. For example, the list clearly states that the district official (*rdzong dpon*) and the estate administrator (*gzhis gnyer*) had the duty to take care of the households within their administration (Cüppers 1999: 59). This list reflects the pragmatic interest that is common to all types of Tibetan texts (Schwieger 2011: 263). It gives concrete instructions by focussing on the ideal behaviour of officials serving the government as district administrators, tax collectors or estate administrators.

The relationship between *mi ser* and estate lords is addressed in Uebach's translation of a 1739 diploma issued to the lords of sPo rong by Pho lha ba.[6] It is clearly stated that the sPo rong lords had the right to demand from the *mi ser* belonging to the estates owned by them taxes per head, taxes for farming land, and grazing grounds and other taxes, such as carrying sand from the shore of the lake (*gram mtsho bye 'don*) or cutting marsh grass (*rtsa 'dam brnga ba*) (Uebach 2007: 272). Although the amount of taxes levied should be based on what the amount had been previously, it is also said that the amount should be appropriate (*ibid.*: 274).[7] Without further explanation, apart from an enumeration of taxes specific for that area, we are groping in the dark as to what exactly that might mean.

Injunctions to take care of subordinates can be found in other public acts as well. A diploma granted by Lhabzang Khan in 1707 prohibits the selling of goods at monopolistic prices (*bam tshong spus bsgyur*),

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[5] The actual year of its composition cannot be determined exactly, because there are several versions (Cüppers 1999: 51).

[6] sPo rong is situated in mNga' ris skor gsum, close to the lake dPal khud mtsho, but had also extraterritorial manors, for example in Gung thang. For a short history of sPo[ng] rong see Ramble (2002).

[7] *Chu yur ma shong lta bu'i rigs sgrub pa.*

because this led among other things to the scattering (*'thor*) of *mi ser* (Schuh 1981a: 60 [Monumenta Tibetica Historica, hereafter MTH, III/5/n°3]). From this day on, the text says, the people should be spared from such unjust hardship. This scattering of *mi ser* amounts to the abandonment of estates. The *mi ser* had no option but to buy from traders who were in possession of documents granting them the right to exact any price they wished for their goods. Thus the *mi ser* lost their economic basis of livelihood. They saw no other solution than looking for income elsewhere. This public act also has a political dimension: by issuing this decree Lhabzang Khan alleviated a form of hardship that had originated with privileges granted by sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. Schuh suggests that this is because he wanted the population to sympathise with him as sovereign (*ibid.*). Whether this was a mere political strategy or in reference to a "duty to take care" was irrelevant to the *mi ser*, as it improved their situation, no matter what the underlying intention.

In the observations and conclusions of his first inspection tour of 1795, after the Chinese official Song Yun had just become Amban (period of office 1794–1799) of Tibet, he remarked on the negligence faced by the *mi ser* and their extreme poverty. These conditions were due to tax demands that were completely out of control, as well as ignorance about the circumstances of the people, a situation that had resulted in *mi ser* running away from the estates to which they belonged. As the tax burden for agricultural land was based on the size of the area of land and not on individuals, the remaining *mi ser* still had to pay the same amount as before. Song Yun pitied them. In a concrete example he mentions a village that had formerly comprised fifty tax-paying households. By the time he visited the village there were only eight households left to shoulder the tax burden of fifty. He identified the reason for these circumstances as the irresponsible and ruthless behaviour of those who should have been responsible for taking care of the *mi ser*: district officials, their representatives and estate administrators (Dabringhaus 1994: 169–70). Although Kalsang Norbu Gurung states in his paper in this volume that it is uncertain whether tax reductions were actually implemented, a decree issued in 1818 by the Ambans encourages *mi ser* to submit complaints to the central government against officials who demanded transportation services in excess of what was specified in their travel documents (*lam yig*) (Schuh 1981b: 43 [Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland,

hereafter VOHD, XI/8/n°6]). Such additional burdens were intolerable and should be punished. Furthermore, it is stated that the recent (*da lam*) tax reductions (*lcog cha*) are meant to give the *mi ser* the opportunity to rebuild what they could not take care of before their taxes were reduced. Further complaints about taxes still being too high are forbidden, and should be and should be punished in unspecified ways. Of course this does not refer directly to a documented basis for the reductions. Despite the effort of improving the *mi ser*'s living conditions, there were apparently *mi ser* who still felt the burden was too heavy or saw a chance to take advantage of the situation.

When the estate lord asked for tax reductions it was not necessarily to relieve the *mi ser* of too heavy a burden. In times of war the amount of military-related taxes, such as provision of troops or food supplies, might be raised, resulting in the impoverishment of *mi ser*. It was due to this that the monastery of dGa' ldan chos skor requested a tax reduction (Schuh 1981a: 168 [MTH III/5/n°11]). Additional taxes levied for the Gorkha Wars had reduced income from the *mi ser*. To restore this level of revenue, dGa' ldan chos skor petitioned the government to reduce the military taxes that had reduced the *mi ser*'s capacity to support the monastery (Schuh 1981a: 168). Another document mentions a rise in tax obligations due to the increased stationing of troops as a result of the resumption of military action in the region (Schneider 2012b: 21 [VOHD XI/17/n°13]). In times of military activity such as the Gorkha Wars of 1788 and 1791, referred to in one of these documents, the tax burden for *mi ser* increased to an extent that made it impossible for them to secure their livelihood. They had to supply the troops with food and whatever was needed, or were themselves sent to the battlefield as soldiers without having received any training (Dabringhaus 1994: 186). Hardships like these increased the number of runaway *mi ser*.

A document of 1889 from Southwest Tibet reveals that impoverishment was caused by the additional burden of sending troops to fight the British (Schuh 1981b: 60–62 [VOHD XI/8/n°13]).[8] This had led to an increased number of runaway *mi ser*, which had in turn resulted in the

[8] The document does not state clearly to which event it refers, but most probably is speaking of the military actions of 1888 related to the British taking over control in Sikkim which had been under the protection of Tibet (for a detailed description of the events, see for example Lamb 1986 [1960]: 139–56).

estate lord failing to pay his taxes to the central government. Since the estate lord had no means of improving the situation for him and his *mi ser* on his own, the government decided that he should lease the estate to someone else. This leaseholder was supposed to support and protect the *mi ser* of the estate, and to avoid levying any taxes or services on them for the next ten years to give them time to recover and make a living on their own again. Furthermore, runaway *mi ser* should come back as far as that was possible. There is no mention of any punishment for having run away, which may be due to the desperate need of labour to run the estate and be able to pay taxes.[9] For the runaways this was probably a lucky opportunity. When *mi ser* ran away from their estate they could not be certain about being able to find employment on another estate on a continuous basis. Although obligation to an estate lord entailed to a burden of duties, it also offered the benefit of the lord's protection when this was needed (Schuh 1988: 38).

The inability to pay taxes also occurred in times of peace due to various circumstances. It resulted in the accumulation of debts up to an amount that was impossible to repay. In cases when a debtor had accumulated a massive level of debt, the creditor might forego levying additional interest on new loans (Schuh 1976: 108). While this measure may seem generous at first sight it was probably a mere formality, as it was obvious that the debtor would never be able to repay all his debts. However, in a different document *mi ser* of lower living standards (*mi ser 'khyer zhan*) were ordered to pay back their debts immediately regardless of their own financial situation (Schneider 2012b: 83 [VOHD XI/17/n°44]). They are admonished to consider the needs of the others, i.e. those of the creditors, above their own. The money was needed for restoring a monastic site attributed to Milarepa.

Another duty of government officials referred to in the abovementioned task list was to render judgements that were reproducible later on. Therefore everything relating to the legal case had to be written down in detailed lists. The *rdzong dpon* was authorised to render juridical decisions, although he had to follow a detailed protocol. After a thorough and well documented investigation, including the reasons for the disputes and the full facts of the cases in question, the decision of the *rdzong* administrative and the amount of fees that had to be paid

[9] Goldstein has pointed out that there was a general lack of labour in Tibet due to a low population (1971a: 533).

were written down in detail as well (Cüppers 1999: 64–65). It was common to approach the district administration or occasionally even the central government to resolve disputes that arose between *mi ser* of two different estates. However, for disputes or crimes involving *mi ser* of only one estate, even in the case of murder, the estate lord had juridical rights to render a decision. While government officials had to transfer the payment for these decisions to the treasurer of the central government, for monastic estate lords such disputes were a means of income (Schwieger forthcoming).

An example of a dispute is concerned with modalities of pasture use (Schuh 1981a: 227–82 [MTH III/5/n°30]): the *mi ser* of Tshong 'dus on the one side claimed to own a certain piece of land, and were therefore in a position to demand payment from the *mi ser* of the monastery bKra shis bsam gtan gling, who let their livestock graze there. When the monastic *mi ser* refused to pay, the Tshong 'dus people removed the livestock from the pasture. In reaction several monks (not the monastic *mi ser*) blocked the access route to it, so that the Tshong 'dus people could no longer reach it. As positions hardened on both sides, it was decided that a court settlement was necessary to solve the situation. Both parties went to Lhasa to present their case. The Lhasa authorities in turn delegated the district authorities to investigate the matter. The investigation concluded that ownership could not be clarified anymore, and both parties were presented with the option of either a general prohibition on using the pasture, no matter by whom, or to settle the matter of usufruct by throwing dice. When each party declared itself in favour of a different option, the minister responsible for the matter in Lhasa ordered them to come and see him. The investigation concluded that the dispute had arisen only because both parties had acted out of bad and insincere motives, treating the regent like a child and the law like a game, without any due respect. The only way to establish clearly what was right and wrong in that case ought to have been interrogation under torture. However, out of consideration for the merit of the founder of bKra shis bsam gtan gling and the poverty of the *mi ser* in that area, this procedure was not applied. Instead, the Tshong 'dus people were pressured to let the livestock of the monastic *mi ser* graze without demanding any fees (Schuh 1983: 305–309; Schuh 1981a: 227–82).

This document not only illustrates legal procedure but also allows us to draw conclusions about the principles of jurisdiction in Tibet.

Because they document every step that was taken to settle a dispute, court settlements are an invaluable source for understanding legal processes and Tibetan society in general (Schneider 2012a: xxv, 66–85 [VOHD XI/16/n°25]; Schuh 1978: 305). The decision was based not only on an investigation but involved consultation of the petitioning parties. The Lhasa authorities only assumed jurisdiction after all other measures had failed, and the final outcome was "a mixture of judicial decision and compromise" (Pirie 2007: 154–55). It demonstrates what Schneider has called the intention of the Tibetans to settle disputes at the lowest possible level (Schneider 2012a: xxv, 66–85 [VOHD XI/16/n°25]). Although the document refers to torture as the only possible means to establish the truth, reasons were found not to apply it, with religious merit especially being cited (Pirie 2007: 155).

In the end everything was back to where it had begun: the monastery's *mi ser* could graze their livestock without having to pay for it. Court settlements were normally a means of preventing irretrievable damage among social groups that were supposed to live together and get along. Therefore, by settling a dispute on a mutual basis a court settlement aimed at keeping intact the social web and the means of cooperation (Schuh 1983: 305).

This example illustrates the principle of taking care in the interrelation between *mi ser* and estate lord. Although the dispute itself arose between the government *mi ser* of Tshong 'dus and the monastery *mi ser* of bKra shis bsam gtan gling, the parties named by the document are the monastery of bKra shis bsam gtan gling and its *mi ser* on the one side and the government *mi ser* on the other. By taking care of its *mi ser* the *bla brang* seems to have prevented them from further punishment. This is quite obvious when we recall the fact that further investigation under torture was not implemented because of the merits of the founder of bKra shis bsam gtan gling. Thus it was no longer the monastery's *mi ser* who were part of the juridical decision here, but their estate lord, that is, the monastery itself.

Another example of *mi ser* being represented by their supervisory institution can be found in a document in which the representatives of a village petitioned against the *bla brang* family of 'Gro mgon. The charge was that the *bla brang* had not paid compensation to *mi ser* from this village for carrying out transportation services for them over the preceding eighteen years (Schuh and Pukhang 1976: 16, 96 [MTH III/2/n°34]; Schuh and Pukhang 1979: 16–17 [MTH III/4/n°34]). As the *bla brang* was obliged by law to pay for such services, it was ordered to

begin doing so, but there was no requirement that it should make up the deficit of the past eighteen years (Schuh and Phukhang 1976: 16, 96; Schuh and Phukhang 1979: 16–17).

INTERRELATIONS OF *MI SER* WITH THE MONASTIC WORLD

Although Tibetans are mostly portrayed as very religious people, willing and happy to send one of their sons to a monastery, we do find examples of the opposite: the monk tax (*grwa khral*), which involved sending the middle son of each family to the monastery, was not fulfilled by the *mi ser* of the monastery of mTho lding in Guge. According to Schuh this might even have been a new tax that was levied on the people of Guge shortly before the monastery petitioned to have that tax enforced (Schuh 1981a: 76). The expansion of the monastery on the one hand and the procrastination over recruiting new monks on the other had led to the necessity of issuing a diploma to enforce the populations' compliance with that duty. This 1741 diploma stipulates that the middle son of every family in that area should be sent to the monastery, and that this should be enforced by the military camp (*sgar*) of that region (Schuh 1981a: 76 [MTH III/5/n°5]). That the military is seen here to be carrying out police functions and is at the disposal of local monasteries or ecclesiastics in particular, does not seem to be an exceptional occurrence, since a similar case is also documented in Southeast Tibet (Schwieger 2011: 243).

Twenty years later, in 1761, we find another diploma also dealing with the necessity of recruiting monks (Schuh 1981a: 113 [MTH III/5/n°12]). It refers back to the first document, stating that those who were responsible for enacting it had failed to do so out of disregard and stubbornness. Why the Guge people did not hand over one son as demanded, and why the military forces had not taken care of collecting the boys, is not mentioned in the document, as this is irrelevant information for the new document. Obviously, sending a son to a monastery would mean the family losing his labour. Considering the permanent lack of labour to fulfil tax obligations this might be a plausible reason not to comply with that demand.

Mi ser could get away from being obliged to hand over one son by paying extra taxes in money to the monastery (Schneider 2012b: 83 [VOHD XI/17/n°44]). Thus, those in possession of financial means

also possessed the wherewithal to be exempted from duties.

MI SER IN INTERRELATION WITH *MI SER*

The Tibetan taxation system was based on various obligations in kind and labour towards the estate lord in return for the right to use fields and pasture for farming and grazing livestock. The amount of taxes to pay was not measured by the economic success achieved, but by the size of the field, amount of livestock, etc. All obligations were ideally fixed in contracts to ensure that there were no adjustments to the due amount from either side. Hard work could lead to prosperity, but equally everything might be lost due to natural disasters, bad harvest, or illnesses. Thus, the taxation system was an opportunity and a risk at the same time (Schuh 1981a: 204). The balance of rights and duties was upset when the system was abused by those who levied taxes without permission from the government. In a court decision based on a petition by salt traders we do find that unauthorised levying of taxes "destroys" the relationship between estate lord and *mi ser* (*ibid.*: 205 [MTH/III/5/n°27]). Additional taxation would have been equivalent to the loss of livelihood for this group of *mi ser* and would have resulted in their dispersal. The reason that the salt traders petitioned was that the 'Brong pa tried to force them to pay a proportion of the salt they were taking from the salt lakes as well as a fee for grazing the transportation sheep on their pasture, because they considered the salt lakes to be their property. These demands had no juridical basis. The petition explains that others had tried to levy unauthorised taxes on them before, but without success. The final decision of the court was that the salt traders did not have to pay anything to the nomads of the salt lakes. On the contrary, they were made responsible for the safety of the traders (*ibid.*: 205). Because salt was a valuable commodity it was a target for brigands, so that there was a necessity for protecting the salt caravans. This is illustrated by another document (Schneider 2012a: 103 [VOHD XI/16/n°45]): after salt traders had been robbed of several of their sheep loaded with salt the inhabitants of the region where the theft occurred were held responsible for finding the sheep and paying a compensation to the traders.

An obligation document (*gan rgya*) aimed at renovating a meditation site of Milarepa states that the village elders were afraid that the pres-

ence of too many inferior *mi ser* with rough customs in this place would result in harm and chaos (Schneider 2012b: 82 [VOHD XI/17/n°44]). The village elders therefore suggested that a special monetary fund be set up by the better-off ones. The aim was clearly to finish the building as fast as possible and therefore avoid having lower-class *mi ser* around for too long. Among other things, the document gives us an insight into the differential status of *mi ser*. The better-off households looked down on the less prosperous—an attitude that is obviously not confined to Tibetan society. Not being well off, or barely even to make a living, meant that the labour of all family members was needed to secure a livelihood: there was no time or funding for education or elegant manners.

Misbehaviour of certain parts of a community is also referred to in an official decree of 1807 (Schuh 1981a: 137 [MTH III/5/n°17]). The document cites damage caused by "men of that region" (*phyogs de'i skye bo*), without further specifying their status, and demands that they refrain from various forms of shameless behaviour: beer-drinking binges, invitation of guests, dancing, singing, smoking, playing dice, inviting nuns to stay for the night, urinating within the temple precincts, and throwing stones. This description of behaviour would surely endorse the concerns of the village elders in the abovementioned document about *mi ser* of lower rank. But it is also to say that the inhabitants of the area took full responsibility for restoring the site, going well beyond the requirements of their tax obligations. This, of course, is due to the religious orientation of the Tibetans: the wish to accumulate good karma in order to secure a rebirth in one of the three higher realms.

Among the large quantity of available contractual documents (*gan rgya*)[10] that deal mostly with tax obligations or transportation services, there are also a few that concerned with settling private disputes or wrongdoings by members of the community. These include a written undertaking by a thief who has admitted stealing from family members (Schneider 2012b: 181 [VOHD XI/17/n°97]). He swears never to do so again and to behave in an ethical and honourable manner. The mention of a guarantor in this document may be the reason why he could escape

[10] *Gan rgya* are contractual documents that, according to Schneider, were very common in Tibetan law and were issued in a variety of situations, such as settlements over a legal dispute at district level, declarations about leases and rents or commitments to restore religious sites (2002: 418).

legal prosecution. If he were to break the terms of that contract, the document would serve as witness for his repeated offence. The document is therefore a threat and a chance to start anew at the same time.

In another document (Schneider 2012b: 27–28 [VOHD XI/17/n°17]), someone named 'Gyur med from Ding ri has treated his fiancée disrespectfully and seems in general to have led a rather dishonourable life, though further details are not given. By signing the contract he commits himself to treating his future wife respectfully and to leading an honourable life in general. Examples like those, although they are rather negative ones, introduce us to individual people among the masses of *mi ser* to whom we aim at giving a face and a voice. Furthermore, the documents show once more the intention to settle disputes at the lowest possible level, and on a basis of agreement rather than immediate punishment.

Demographics

Registers[11] compiled by the estate lord to administer his estate and its income are valuable sources for our understanding of the demographic features of an estate. Registers contain detailed numbers of dependent peasants, the size of fields they were cultivating, how much they had sown on these fields and the proportion of the yield they had to deliver to the monastery (Schuh 1988: 167–99). With the help of registers, it is possible to obtain demographic overviews of the peasants who were bKra shis bsam gtan gling dependents. The lists are classified by name, social group (*khral 'dzin, dud chung, she 'dzin*), status within the family (father, mother, etc., adopted daughter/son), and as far as available each person's age. There is also information about the number of people, male and female, who have come to the estate by exchange, how many have been exchanged or married off to another estate, and how many have obtained *mi bogs*[12] status. Everything is noted down in a very precise manner, to keep track of the monastery's economic capacities (*ibid.*: 98–139).

[11] The documents edited by Schuh regarding information on demographic structures of the monastery of bKra shis bsam gtan gling of sKyid grong contain numerous terms that fall under the category of "register": *zhib gzhung, zhing tho, gzhis khang dang sa zhing gi deb, mchod gzhis deb, sa zhing gi tho*.

[12] Literally, "human lease". For a description of this category of *mi ser* see Goldstein 1971.

Registers such as these enable us to draw conclusions about a given region's demographic structure, including information on marriage, birth and death rates, as well as the size of the monastic population compared to the lay community. Thus we learn that in 1830 bKra shis bsam gtan gling monastery received tax payments from 148 households. Only the name of the head of the household of each family is mentioned, as he was considered its representative and was held responsible for the whole family's actions. Out of 148 households belonging to the monastery, the members of 71 households were living elsewhere and paying a *mi bogs* fee for being allowed to do so. 77 households with 328 family members were living on the estate, and the amount of tax they had to pay is given in detail. The average number of family members is 4.25 (*ibid.*: 31–37). On average every household had 2.42 children that survived, but the average married woman delivered seven children throughout her life (*ibid.*: 63).

Without being able to differentiate between first and second marriages Schuh was able to calculate the average age of women at marriage as 22.05 years, and that for men as 29.8 years. While this was the average, he points out that some girls were married off at the very young age of 15 (*ibid.*).

As an overall result of his study of registers Schuh draws the conclusion that the bigger *khral pa* households had more children than the smaller and poorer *dud chung* families due to social and economic advantage. Thus, Tibetan population growth was not regulated by biological or physiological deficiencies, but by social and economic factors (*ibid.*: 64).

Concluding remarks

The crucial importance of documents for everyday life in Tibet is undoubted. There seems to be a documentary witness for practically everything: selling linen, exchanging one *mi ser* for another, signing written commitment contracts, as well as registers of paid taxes, receipts for having done so, official remarks on how to act in which situation, and so forth. Thanks to this varied wealth of archival material we are in a position to reveal its value for social history by approaching it through socio-economic questions.

The life of *mi ser* was defined by obligations towards the estate lord and the central government on the one hand, but also by the rights that they could demand from the higher authorities, assuming that they had fulfilled their obligations. Remarkably, although Tibetan legal processes relied on centuries-old rules and were fixed in legal codes, the actual decisions that were taken relied on the social status of the contestants and the legal documents one could present to corroborate one's demands, as well as on the principle of the need for the petitioning parties to reach an agreement.

Mi ser were carrying a burden of tax obligations they had to pay no matter what happened, be it war, an epidemic, a bad harvest or traders looking to maximise their profit by selling at monopolistic prices. In not a few cases, as shown above, *mi ser* were impoverished and incapable of securing their livelihood. The duty to take care of the *mi ser* belonging to the estate, district or even the whole of Tibet is stressed over and over again; but the failure to meet this obligation led to *mi ser* abandoning their estates to search for better living conditions elsewhere. One way of avoiding this measure was to petition a higher-ranking authority, a measure that in many cases led to a juridical decision that reduced taxes or declared the taxes demanded as unauthorised. As we have seen above, the impoverishment of *mi ser* also had consequences for the estate lord. Without their labour he was unable to pay his taxes to the state, and this resulted in his own impoverishment and in some cases the loss of the estate. Just because the estate lord ruled over his *mi ser*, this did not mean that he did not have to take them into account, as there was a degree of mutual dependency.

While most examples cited above are particular occurrences of petitions, dispute settlements, and tax obligations, overall demographic information on *mi ser* can provide the data necessary for statistical analysis. By adding the few examples of personal information, such as someone not being expelled from his family in spite of stealing from them, or the moral expectations of leading an honourable life, without excessive gambling, consumption of alcohol, and so forth, we can obtain more than just a glimpse into the daily life of *mi ser*. Combining all this information in a systematic manner allows us to "construct, or reconstruct [...] a coherent, preferably a consistent, system of behaviour or thought" (Hobsbawm 1988: 22).

This paper is thus not only a sample of the available material, but also a sample of the circumstances and activities of *mi ser* during the dGa' ldan pho brang period.

However, this methodology is limited to some extent, and confronts us with a nearly insoluble problem of historical research. We need to take into consideration the fact that subordinates often wear a performance mask in the presence of higher authorities. For example, we can assume that there was a tactical need to appear as loyal subordinates in the presence of authority for the salt traders petitioning against other *mi ser* who had tried to levy unjust taxes on them. But apart from the tactical need to appear loyal how can we say what they really thought? How can we write a history from below if we have archival sources that are mainly produced "from above"? Although these documents usually reflect the attitude of the ruling class, when read against the grain they become vital sources of social history.

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THE ROLE OF AMBANS IN THE DALAI LAMA GOVERNMENT ACCORDING TO THE *TEN-POINT EDICT* OF 1795

KALSANG NORBU GURUNG

INTRODUCTION

The *Ten-Point Edict* or *Regulation, rTsa tshig don mtshan bcu*, is one of the few important documents prepared in collaboration with the Qing Ambans in Lhasa and the Dalai Lama government.[1] According to the available draft (*zin bris*) of the edict, the eighth Dalai Lama (1758–1804) had instructed the then regent, the third rTa tshag Ba so rje drung ho thog tu Ye shes blo bzang bstan pa'i mgon po (1760–1810) and the four cabinet ministers (*bka' blon*) to consult the Ambans about improving the situation of the impoverished *mi ser* by releasing them from various tax obligations. The four cabinet ministers then put forward a request to the Ambans to issue this edict. Therefore, it was prepared in 1795 by Amban Song-Yun (1752–1835; Song spelled *gsung* in Tibetan) and assistant Amban He-Ning alias He-Ying (d. 1821; He spelled *ho* in Tibetan) in Chinese and Tibetan languages.[2] It is still uncertain, however, whether this edict was ever implemented. The main reasons for this uncertainty are the absence of an official stamp on this copy of the edict[3] and the absence of any other identical copy, or of any

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[1] I am currently working on an English translation of the *Ten-Point Edict*, which will be published along with the English translation of its Chinese version undertaken by my colleague Liu Yuxuan. We intend to include facsimiles and transliterations of the manuscript in the publication.

[2] I note here that Ya Hanzhang (1991: 84–85) has quoted a summary English translation without any reference to his source. However, from his reference to the Amban Song-Yun, the eighth Dalai Lama and the year 1795, and judging from the content, he has most probably translated and summarised the *Ten-Point Edict*. He further writes that it was the eighth Dalai Lama who made the decision on the advice of the Amban Song-Yun. This, to my understanding of the relevant passages in the *Ten-Point Edict*, should not be read as the edict was actually issued by the eighth Dalai Lama. From all the occurrences of the first person plural subject "*nged bka' mngags am ban gnyis*" in the edict, it is clear that the two Ambans were the joint authors of this edict.

[3] For example, see documents 48 and 49 in *CHAT* 1995, the other two edicts bearing seals issued by the same administration in 1795.

reference to it, known to us. Nevertheless, this draft is a highly valuable reference for the social history of Tibetan *mi ser* in late 18[th] century Tibet.[4] In particular, this document sheds light on the activities that the Amban Song-Yun, his assistant He-Ning and the eighth Dalai Lama attempted to carry out. As I will discuss later, it is quite clear from this edict that the Ambans were highly influential in the decision-making process in the Dalai Lama government. Therefore, I will discuss the role of the two Ambans in the Dalai Lama government by analysing the *Ten-Point Edict* in this paper. To understand their role, I shall first give a brief historical overview of the Ambans in Tibet, on the basis of some available publications, followed by details of how the power and authority of the Ambans was consolidated over the course of time.

The Role of Ambans in Tibet

According to Kolmaš (1994), the Ambanship in Lhasa started in 1727 during the Yongzheng Era (1723–1735), when a Manchu member of the Plain White Banner named Sengge was appointed to take charge as Superintendent. Some years previously, when Yongzheng had become the Emperor after his father's death in 1723, he withdrew all the Qing officials from Lhasa (Petech 1972: 92, 255; Shakabpa 1984 [1967]: 141).[5] The officials were again appointed to Lhasa in 1727 by the Yongzheng Emperor for the purpose of putting an end to the civil war in Tibet (*ibid.*: 143–44).[6] This position did not carry the title of Amban at the time, but the incumbents were appointed as Superintendent, Commander, and the like. In 1750, Bandi (No. 23 in Kolmaš 1994) was

4 Since the exact meaning of the Tibetan word *mi ser* is still inconclusive, I prefer to use the Tibetan word itself, in the plural, and refer more or less to the commoners who work for the estates, purely based on the contextual meaning in this edict.

5 Shakabpa writes: "In 1723 the new Manchu ruler (*i.e.* Yonhzheng Emperor) began a policy of retrenchment. He withdrew the garrison from Lhasa, leaving the administration of central Tibet entirely in the hands of Tibetan officials, without any military support from the Manchus".

6 Shakabpa gives the following reason: "Two months later, a large imperial army under the command of the Manchus, Jalangga, and Mailu, arrived in Lhasa. The expedition had been dispatched by the Yung-cheng Emperor for the purpose of protecting the Dalai Lama and putting an end to the civil war. [...] The expedition arrived on September 4[th] and the Manchu leaders, Jalangga and Mailu, together with the two resident Manchu officials, Senge and Mala, constituted a court of justice to try the ministers and their followers".

appointed as the official responsible for Tibetan affairs in Lhasa, and he was known by the title "Amban", most likely because of his previous position as the Amban of Qinghai in Xining. The title of "Amban" had been used for that position until the end of the Qing dynasty. The Ambans were appointed for a maximum period of up to six years depending on their services.

As Goldstein concludes, the role and power of Ambans in Lhasa until 1793, when the *29-Point Edict* was issued, was unspecified and thus uncertain.[7] Goldstein writes:

> The actual role of the Amban in Tibet is difficult to assess. Despite the rhetoric and rules the Qing prepared, their power appears to have varied considerably in accordance with many factors such as their personality and competence in relation to that of the leaders of Tibet, and the nature of the political situation in China and Tibet at any point in time. (Goldstein 1997: 20–21)

There were no actual detailed guidelines regarding the responsibilities of the Ambans and they therefore did practically nothing.[8] One source informs us that the Ambans' lack of experience, due to the short dura-

[7] A facsimile version of this edict is published in *CHAT* 1995 (see document 50), and its three printed versions published in Chab spel *et al.* 1989: 17–31; with minor editing as a chapter of *Chu glang wang shu tshur phul* in Chab spel *et al.* 1991: 116–17; 131–46, and in Chab spel and Nor brang (eds) 1991: 317–33. Two separate edicts were attached to the *29-Point Edict* in the facsimile version, which gives the date of 58th Qianlong Era (i.e. 1793). However they do not necessarily belong together. The physical features of the facsimile version such as paper size and handwriting make it dubious. I shall refer to Peter Schwieger's forthcoming book, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China*, in which he convincingly argues in this regard. Therefore, one must be cautious about assuming that this version of the facsimile was originally attached to the two separate manuscripts. According to the colophon at the end, a Tibetan translation along with the Chinese original was discovered in Iron-sheep year, 7th month and 21st day, i.e. 1811 (cf. Schwieger forthcoming). Ya (1991: 72) also informs us about the original in Chinese and its translation into Tibetan. On the basis of the acquired information (cf. Schwieger forthcoming), the English translation in Ya (1991: 72–83) is possibly from the Chinese original that he has seen in the Jokhang temple along with a Tibetan translation. As Schwieger (forthcoming) discovered, there are at least two Tibetan translations: one extended version (that I have not yet seen, cf. Schwieger forthcoming) and the other published in the facsimile above.

[8] Goldstein (1997: 21) and his source Ya (1991: 83–84) summarise a letter by the Emperor Qianlong to Commanding General Fu Kang'an in 1792 to instruct the Ambans in Lhasa. "Usually capable, competent officials are assigned to posts in the capital; those sent to Tibet have been mostly mediocrities who did practically nothing but wait for the expiration of their tenures of office so they could return to Beijing. [...] From now on the administration of Tibet should be effectively supervised by the Resident Official".

tion of their stay in Tibet, made it difficult for them to deal with the situation of Tibet properly, whereas another source even suggests that the indecent activities of Amban in Tibet caused them to be negligent in their duties (Nor bu bsam 'phel 2008: 6). Besides, the most serious disturbance in the administration of the Ambans in Lhasa seems to have been fuelled by the two Nepal-Tibet wars of 1788 and 1792. Whatever the actual reason might have been, several Ambans during that period were criticised and either degraded or discharged from their positions, as they were considered to have failed to carry out their duties satisfactorily. For example, Qinglin (or Qingling), assistant Amban from 1783–1788, was discharged on account of his mismanagement of border troubles with Nepal; Yamantai, assistant Amban from 1786–1788, was first degraded, then reappointed to the same post from 1790–1791, but was subsequently discharged; Shulian Amban from 1788–1790, Pufu Amban in 1790, Baotai Amban from 1790–1791, and Ehui Amban from 1791–1792 were all discharged before ending their official term (See Kolmaš 1994, No. 48, 50/56, 52, 55, 57, 60). It is evident that the period during the Nepal-Tibet war was very unfavourable for the Ambans in Lhasa. Therefore, whoever was to take up this position during those years had to face a difficult challenge and to put all his ability and skill at stake. In addition, as stated above there were no actual detailed guidelines regarding the responsibilities of the Ambans.

A number of historians and scholars claim that the implementation of the *29-Point Edict* in 1793 strengthened the role and the power of Ambans in Lhasa (cf. Ya 1991: 83; Goldstein 1997: 20; Chab spel and Nor brang 1991: 316; Rockhill 1910: 53). This is to say that the Ambans after that point were given equal power and authority to that of the Dalai Lama to take control of all the major country policies, such as social, political, financial, judicial, military as well as Tibet's border administration.[9] As the power of the Ambans in Tibet was strengthened, the Qianlong Emperor appointed more skilled, capable, and literate officials to carry out the task more diligently. One of the most renowned officials who has featured prominently in the history of the Ambans in Lhasa is Song-Yun. Song-Yun was appointed as the Amban of Lhasa on 14 August 1794 and assumed his office in Lhasa between 22 December 1794 and 20 January 1795. He remained in the position and served for around four years as Amban until 25 February 1799

[9] See particularly points 10, 11, 14, 18, 21, 23, and 24 in the *29-Point Edict*.

(Kolmaš 1994: 36). According to Kolmaš, he was the head of the Ministry of Works and Commander-in-Chief before he moved to Lhasa. This suggests that he was in a very high position among the Qing officials and must have been known as a very capable official to fulfil the wish of the Emperor regarding Tibetan affairs.

As the assistant to Song-Yun's administration, another renowned official that the Qianlong Emperor appointed was Amban He-Ning. According to Kolmaš (1994: 36), He-Ning assumed his post as the assistant Amban between 31 March and 28 April in 1794 and was promoted to Amban between 25 January and 23 February in 1800. He remained in Tibet as the second Amban concurrently with Amban Yingshan (1799–1803) for about half a year. The literary skill of these two Ambans Song-Yun and He-Ning are obvious from the authorship of numerous works published under their names. Kolmaš identifies these two among the first three Ambans who became famous as men of letters capturing the years of their activity in Tibet (Kolmaš 1994: 14).

The strengthened role and authority of the Ambans as influenced by the *29-Point Edict* issued a few years before the appointment of these two incumbents is clearly visible in the *Ten-Point Edict*. As mentioned above, this edict had been prepared by these two Ambans at the request of the cabinet ministers. The major purpose of this edict was apparently to improve the social situation of impoverished Tibetan *mi ser*, particularly perhaps in several districts of the southern border regions, where the peasantry had had to face severe economic instability due to the Nepal-Tibet Wars until 1792.

CAUSES OF THE PROBLEMS: "IMPOVERISHMENTS"

According to the preface of the *Ten-Point Edict*, the causes of impoverishment are as follows: firstly, the *mi ser* were affected by an epidemic and were in great danger of dying. In this regard, we know of one incident from Ya Hanzhang about a smallpox epidemic in northern Tibet. Ya writes: "At this time [ca. 1795] a smallpox epidemic was ravaging Tibet, taking a heavy toll of human lives. The Amban took effective measures to combat the killer disease. What he did was recorded on a stone slab in front of the Jokhang Temple" (1991: 86). The inscription on the stone that Ya has translated reads, with few lines omitted here, as follows:

> Smallpox victims end up in caves or on the wasteland; deserted by their next of kin and left utterly without help, none can ever survive. Their fate is indeed tragic. I had a number of one-storey houses built for the Tibetans struck by smallpox at Langdang'gu in northern Tibet with my own money. I fed the sick, and sent a detail of Han and Tibetan soldiers to look after them. [...] I persuaded the Dalai Lama and the Panchen to donate food to smallpox victims. (*ibid.*: 86)

The Amban's encouragement of the Dalai Lama to support the victims mentioned in this inscription is corroborated by the following passage in the preface of the *Ten-Point Edict*. I translate:

> If the investigation of this matter is neglected and those *mi ser* are not taken care of with love, the government's *mi ser* will gradually disperse; their foods and clothes will deteriorate and they will lose their homes. Now, the government should pay the cost and the homes must be restored in order to support the resettlement of the *mi ser*.

Secondly, they had to flee from their land because of various tax obligations such as transportation duty (*'u lag*), horse-load (*rta khal*), personnel or porter (*mi reng*), fodder, firewood and food provisions as specified in the third point of this edict. Thirdly, as suggested in the sixth point, some officials had ignored the tax obligation manual when collecting the taxes, and they had over-collected as they wished. This misconduct on the part the officials overburdened the *mi ser*.

In addition, I should refer to Dabringhaus (1994: 178–79), who has translated five causes of impoverishment described in a report prepared by Song-Yun that is now kept in the collection of *Weizang Tongzhi*. This collection has been tentatively attributed to Song-Yun or to his predecessor He-Lin (1792–1794), or else to their assistant Amban He-Ning.[10] Since the following five causes were prepared by Song-Yun, as Dabringhaus suggests, they are strongly related to the purpose of preparing the *Ten-Point Edict*. Although the details about the injustice and arbitrariness of the tax system are not explicitly given in the *Ten-Point Edict*, these are apparent from the causes highlighted above. The five causes may be summarised as follows:

First, some field administrators not only demanded more than agreed, disregarding the agreed proportion of their harvest the *mi ser* have to deliver, but also demanded that the *mi ser* should cultivate and

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[10] For a different opinion about its authorship, cf. Kolmaš 1994: 35–36 (notes 43 and 46) and Liu Yuxuan in this volume.

irrigate their fields. Therefore, the *mi ser* could not cultivate their own fields and consequently they fell into debt.

Second, there were people under the administrators who did not work themselves, but sent other agents to the fields with intention of filling their own pockets. Those agents demanded a surplus of the harvest for themselves.

Third, some degenerate leaders forced *mi ser* to provide labour under the pretext that the work was urgently needed, or else collected cash from the *mi ser*.

Fourth, the private-estate officials demanded corvée labour from the *mi ser*, who also had to cultivate their own fields at the same time. Those *mi ser* inevitably had to neglect their own fields. Even so, the estate forced them to deliver the grain tax.

Fifth, the field administrators often took away the plough cattle in order to rent to others or to use them privately. Therefore the peasants were never able use the cattle to plough their own fields.[11]

THE TEN-POINT EDICT

The two Ambans Song-Yun and He-Ning proposed resolutions to minimise poverty through the *Ten-Point Edict.* These resolutions also reflect the role and power of the Ambans in Lhasa until the end of the Qianlong Era in 1795, obviously stimulated by the *29-Point Edict* of 1793. It is clear from the *Ten-Point Edict* that these two Ambans were primarily concerned about the situation of the Tibetan *mi ser*. Thus the attempts to improve their conditions through this edict can be summarised as follows: resettlement of the *mi ser*, ensuring their security in terms of provisions, work and financial support through measures such as refund, exemption and concessions on taxes, and the remission of fines due from the past, as well as legal protection by instructing the officials in the law and in making judicial decision. In order to describe these resolutions in detail, I will summarise and categorise the ten points.

[11] I thank my colleague Jeannine Bischoff for helping me to translate these passages into English.

Re-settlement and supply

The first point of the edict focuses on the re-settlement policy concerning *mi ser* who have fled or have been expelled by building and restoring houses with the expenses provided from the account of the Dalai Lama. The district officials were assigned to investigate the number of ruined houses which might be appropriate for restoration in the districts under the territory of the Dalai Lama.[12] This measure was probably also intended to attract *mi ser* to the domain of the Dalai Lama government and thereby to increase the number of government taxpayers.

Among the *mi ser* who had fled, those who took refuge in aristocratic estates were also relocated, as we can see from the description given in points six and nine. Since these two points are more appropriate in this context, I shall present them here. According to point six, the *mi ser* who are willing to return are permitted to go back to their homes and work in their fields, with provisions and seed grain supplied by the concerned district officials, but the expenses are to be covered by the government. Those who do not want to return to their home are allowed to rent a field and farm it with a supply of provisions and seed grain from the district commissioners.

In point nine, the aristocratic (*drag btsan*) officials are urged to encourage the government *mi ser*, who have recently abandoned their previous estates to work for them, to return the government estates in order to cultivate land in their native villages. To prevent their situation from declining at home, the Dalai Lama will take care of food supplies and seed grain for impoverished *mi ser*. However, the aristocrat officials should supply provisions for their travel, which will be fully compensated by the government.

The second point is about solving the difficulties of the relocated *mi ser* once they have been resettled. The two Ambans attempted to solve their difficulties through the following propositions. First, that district officials should ensure that each family of relocated *mi ser*, including the elderly and children, should receive food supplies for their subsistence and seed grain with which to cultivate their fields. Secondly, the *mi ser* are encouraged to cultivate their fields with the concession of

[12] The districts under the Dalai Lama specified here extend from sMar kham (modern-day Chab mdo prefecture, TAR) to lHa sa, bKra shis lhun po (in gZhis ka rtse prefecture), mNya' nang and sKyid grong. The last three districts were affected during Nepal-Tibet Wars until 1792.

waiving their tax obligation (*khral bogs*) and transportation service (*lam thogs*) for three years. Thirdly, the *mi ser* are reassured against officials taking bribes and forcibly blocking the sources of their irrigation.

Tax refund, exemption, alternative, and concession

The third point concerns compensation of one silver *tram* coin to be paid by the Dalai Lama government to all families of impoverished *mi ser* to offset the burden of various tax obligations such as transportation labour, animal transport, personal labour and provision of fodder and firewood.

The fourth point states that the Dalai Lama has agreed to rescind the debt of cash due in lieu of the unpaid provision of pack-animals over the past twenty years.[13] The tax may be resumed after ten years on the condition that the *mi ser* have recovered from their adverse living conditions. However, the Ambans also cautioned the *mi ser* to be diligent in cultivating their fields and not to wander off in disregard of the Dalai Lama's intention.

The fifth point is about the options available to the *mi ser* for the payment of taxes or interest on loans, and how their tax liability might be adjusted. For instance, the *mi ser* may pay their grain tax in either kind or cash (*spus dngul*). The tax obligation set previously—10 *khal* of grain in return of one *khal* of seed at the best-quality agricultural land, 7 *khal* at the medium-quality agricultural land and 5 *khal* at the lowest-quality agricultural land—may be reduced to end the poverty resulting from poor harvests caused by adverse weather conditions.

The sixth point specifies the cash equivalent for payments of grain, animal fodder, firewood and livestock.[14] It also specifies the rescission

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13 In this regard, I shall quote here the details from the *Ten-Point Edict*: "During the past thirteen, fourteen or twenty years, the Dalai Lama has been sending officials to collect horses or mules from *mi ser* in certain districts (sMar khams, Go 'jo, mDzo sgang, gSang sngags chos rdzong [the southwest of mDzo sgang], sPo bo, lHo rdzong, Sho mdo, dPal 'bar, lCags ra [unknown] and Kong po), or the equivalent amount in cash if [the *mi ser*] did not want to give the animals".

14 The cash amounts fixed in lieu of the tax as recorded in the book are: two silver *srang* coins (equals thirteen *tram* and five *skar* coins) for ten *khal*; one *tram* and five *skar* coins for one *khal* of grain; five silver *zho* coins for animal fodder; eight silver *zho* coins for firewood; seven and a half silver *skar* coins for one head of livestock, one silver *tram* for ten sheep, and one silver *tram* for twenty goats each year; and one pig per twenty pigs each year from Kongpo *mi ser*.

of all taxes for the wood hare year (1795) as well as of fines to the value of over 40,000 silver *srang* (between 56th and 59th Qianlong Era, 1791–1794) to enable *mi ser* to recover from poverty.

Instruction in equal law

The seventh point is concerned mainly with the collaboration of the district officials with the Storekeeper and Revenue Collectors (*bkar yong*) in ensuring friendly treatment of *mi ser*. First, the *bkar yong* sent specially by the Dalai Lama to all regions annually are enjoined to collect taxes strictly and fairly without distinguishing between *mi ser* on the basis of their income. Secondly, in collaboration with *bkar yong* officials, the district officials are urged to collect the taxes in accordance with economic, harvest, and weather conditions.

The eighth point describes the responsibilities of the grass-keeper (*rtswa gnyer*) and the firewood-keeper (*shing gnyer*) appointed by the government. The keepers may purchase fodder and firewood from the four districts, bDe chen, sTod lung, Ra sgang and sTag rtse, and transport them to Lhasa, if they could not obtain them around Lhasa. They must provide victuals for those who make the purchases and also pay the fees for the pack animals and personal labour.[15]

Point nine also specifies two important points for dealing with *mi ser* on non-governmental estates. First, those *mi ser* on the private estates of dignitaries such as ministers, army generals and district officials, and *mi ser* on the monastic estates are granted larger tax concessions than *mi ser* on the government estates. Secondly, if any impoverished *mi ser* are reported in those estates, they are entitled to receive cash support from the Dalai Lama government.

The tenth point concerns legal instruction in solving the problems and hardships caused by aristocratic officials for the *mi ser* in relation to transportation duties. Some Tibetan gentry (*mi drag*) misuse an edict (*bka' shog*) as a pretext, and forcibly refuse to pay their transportation tax. Some even shift their burden of transportation labour (*'u lag*) duty onto poor *mi ser*. To solve these problems, the Amban declares that the Dalai Lama has enforced the law to apply the transportation tax unvaryingly to all the upper and lower strata of *mi ser*, to levy tax equitably

[15] The fees fixed here are: one *zho* coin per one pack animal (*khal ma*), one *zho* coin per mule and five *skar* coins per head per day.

from the aristocrat *mi ser*, and not to permit the estate-holders to shift their responsibility onto the poor *mi ser*. Secondly, with regard to the transportation permit, aristocrat officials must obtain travel documents from the Amban's office for whomsoever they engage to carry out the trade. Those employed must hire the necessary transportation labour and provide sufficient fees for those they engage, and thus they may not cause hardships for the poor *mi ser*.

Judicial decision

The Ambans were also influential in legal decisions. Almost all the ten points conclude with assurances of rewards for positive service and severe punishment for dereliction. It is apparently not relevant for the Ambans to specify in the edict what kind of punishment might be meted out. However, they have made clear in this edict that transgressions and virtues will be respectively punished and rewarded. The severest punishment or penalties for the officials are reserved for cases like: inappropriate management of the building construction and the expenses involved; oppressing and using force against *mi ser*; collecting taxes improperly; ignoring one's responsibilities; submitting false tax accounts; practising fraud with respect to the *mi ser*'s supplies; and finally, causing hardship to the *mi ser* by giving them tea in exchange for grain. Severe punishment will be meted out to *mi ser* in cases such as covetously taking double welfare payments, and, in the case of wealthy *mi ser*, fraudulently receiving such cash allocations. Rewards and recognition are announced for officials who manage construction projects and building expenses honestly, who are diligent and active, and who submit genuine accounts of taxes.

CONCLUSION

As the power and authority of the Ambans in Lhasa were unspecified and uncertain, and because the two Nepal-Tibet Wars between 1788 and 1792 caused instability in their administration, the *29-Point Edict* was issued in 1793. This raised and strengthened the power of the Ambans in Lhasa. As their power strengthened, Song-Yun and his assistant He-Ning became involved in various affairs of the government, estates and the *mi ser*. One obvious example is the attempt to improve the situation

of Tibetan *mi ser* who were affected by epidemics, impoverished because of various tax obligations, and afflicted by the injustice of corrupt officials. Through this *Ten-Point Edict,* the two Ambans proposed resolutions to reduce poverty by means of resettlement of the *mi ser*, providing security with respect to provisions and work, and financial support in the form of tax refunds, exemptions, and concessions, and legal protection by instructing officials in the exercise of equal law and judicial punishment.

The resettlement and security policy would have attracted *mi ser* into the orbit of the Dalai Lama government, and this would consequently have increased the number of government taxpayers. This is clear also from point nine, which specifies that aristocrat officials are urged to return the government *mi ser* to the government estates from which they have fled. Through financial support, the *mi ser* were encouraged to work hard on the fields. This policy is beneficial not only to raise the *mi ser* out of poverty, but also to enhance the situation of the Dalai Lama government from many perspectives (politically, socially, economically and legally). Through the instruction of officials in legal procedures, the *mi ser* might suffer less injustice and arbitrariness from the tax system and less hardship from the officials. The officials and the *mi ser* would be encouraged and would feel appreciated by the reward and recognition they received for their positive service, and would be discouraged from dereliction of duty by the threat of severe punishment. As said above, I have not found any concrete evidence to prove the actual implementation of this edict. Nevertheless, this is a valuable document from which we can learn about the situation of Tibetan *mi ser* and the role and power of Ambans in Tibet in the late 18th century, as the content tells us a great deal about their social, political and economic activities, and their involvement with land management. More importantly, we can learn from this edict that the role of Amban in Lhasa during this period was not limited, and that the two Ambans were very actively involved in various affairs of the government, the estates, and the *mi ser* of Tibet.

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IN SEARCH OF THE TIBETAN TRANSLATORS WITHIN THE MANCHU EMPIRE: AN ATTEMPT TO GO FROM THE GLOBAL TO THE LOCAL

FABIENNE JAGOU

The translation of Manchu-Tibetan administrative documents raises many questions, and many of these must remain unanswered given our present state of knowledge. In the present contribution "translation" and "translator" will be understood in terms of circulation and exchange. Both notions will be envisioned as a flux between the "global" (the Manchu Empire) and the "local" (Tibet), and numerous channels of communication are likely to be revealed in the long run.

FROM THE GLOBAL...

Studies related to the use of translation as a cross-cultural tool between China and Tibet are rare. It is mainly the field of religion that has been covered. In China, scholarship in this domain ranges from the dissemination of Buddhism through the translation of religious texts from India to Japan *via* China and Tibet from the eighth century, to the Jesuits' first translations of Christian terminology into Chinese in the eighteenth century. In Tibet, translations of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit gave birth to various schools. In both countries, these first efforts at translation initiated many debates that remain open to the present. Translations of religious texts are considered vehicles for a better understanding of imported religions and their adoption, and also as tools for proselytism. This effort of diffusion through masters and texts was followed throughout the duration of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), and lay at the origin of the knowledge of Tibetan esoteric Buddhism in China. During the Qing dynasty, the Tibetan Buddhist Canon was reproduced in Tibetan at least five times by the Manchu Emperors, and underwent translation into Chinese (1738), Mongolian (1749) and Manchu (1790). Then, at the beginning of the twentieth century, following the destruction of a large corpus of Buddhist texts during the

Taiping Rebellion, some lay Buddhists searched for Tibetan esoteric texts and produced new translations of Tibetan Buddhist works.

Western scientific analyses of language during the Qing dynasty include studies of the use of Manchu by the Qing. These demonstrate that the Qing consistently favoured Manchu: it was the official language of the state, mainly because Manchu was the language of the Aisin Gioro clan, the imperial clan. Throughout the Qing era, with a reinforcement of this policy under Qianlong's reign (r. 1736–1796), officials were obliged to write their memoranda to the Emperor in Manchu. The mandatory use of Manchu for all military and political correspondence ensured its status as a kind of secure language (Crossley and Rawski 1993: 63, 70–71). For the authors, this policy of favouring Manchu "suggests the importance the Manchus themselves eventually placed on language as a marker of cultural difference to the end of the eighteenth century" (Berger 2003: 5). At the end of the eighteenth century, the Qing wish was that the Manchu could express themselves in Manchu, the Mongols in Mongolian and the Chinese in Chinese (Crossley and Rawski 1993: 80). Apparently, no mention is made of the Tibetans.

This idea was emphasised by the creation of dictionaries which incorporated the five languages of the Empire by the end of the eighteenth century. These dictionaries began with the first Manchu dictionary, published in 1708. These were followed by: a bilingual Manchu-Mongol dictionary (1717); a Manchu-Mongol-Chinese dictionary (1780); a Manchu-Mongol-Chinese and Tibetan dictionary (1780) (*Si ti qing wenjian* 四体清文鑑); the Uighur language was included within the last of these, with phonetic transcriptions for Tibetan and Uighur vocabularies, and all five languages of the Qing Empire (*Wu ti qing wenjian* 五体清文鑑) were eventually united within a dictionary concluded between 1787 and 1794. These dictionaries were progressively expanded to include vocabulary related to various fields such as religion, landscape and daily life, but very little about administration and administrative terms that might help with government correspondence. Nothing is known about the use of these dictionaries and their distribution within the Empire. Of course, their existence perpetuates the idea of the universalism of the Qing Empire and emphasises its multi-ethnic form. They were also intended to standardise the five languages of the Empire (Rawski 1996: 836). However, the production of these dictionaries raises numerous questions: were they a kind of mirror of this Qing

universalism or were they practical tools? Were they used by officials, notably those who worked on the border areas of the Manchu Empire? Who was involved in the creation of supposed translation tools? Who could have been considered as official translators at the Qing court? According to Rawski, the Emperor appointed imperial princes and high officials who supervised a large number of scholars. Nothing seems definitive, and nomination to such a task seems to have been an irregular affair (Rawski 2005: 309). For example, I notice within the list of contributors to the *Five Languages Dictionary* four Tibetan monks and two correctors who could have spoken and read Tibetan because they lived in Tibet at the end of the eighteenth century (Sun Shiyi 孫士毅, 1720–1796 and Ehui 鄂輝, date unknown). But there is no way to determine whether they took part in writing the Tibetan part of the dictionary or worked in another language section. Although translation offices existed at court, the task of producing the dictionaries seems not to have been the responsibility of any office in particular.

Others questions are related to the translation services at the Qing court in Beijing. Our first insight would be to think that the Court of Border Affairs (*Lifan yuan* 理藩院), would provide a translation department. But there is no evidence that such a department existed. The Court of Border Affairs was not a decision-making body within the Qing administration. It was an archive ministry: two archival services were in use, Chinese (where Manchu and Mongol *literati* worked) and Manchu (Jagou forthcoming). It is still uncertain what became of the documents written in Mongolian and in Tibetan. Were they kept within another administrative section of the Qing government? Were they left within the local Manchu *yamen*? We do know, however, that the Court of Border Affairs was in charge of Tibetan language classes. Indeed, in Beijing, from 1658, every banner had to appoint three men to learn the Tibetan language (*Da Qing huidian*, Kangxi edition, 1690, *juan* 144, 1b; *Da Qing huidian*, Yongzheng edition, 1732, juan 222, 1b). Later (1741), under the Qianlong Emperor, this informal structure became the "Office Dedicated to the Study of Tibetan" (*Tanggute xue si* 唐古忒學司). It was composed of one assistant teacher and four Mongolian secretaries (*Da Qing huidian*, Qianlong edition, 1748, juan 79, 1b). The office was reinforced with more members in 1839 by Emperor Daoguang (r. 1821–1850) and was supposed to enrol twenty-four students for five years. A final examination directed by the Dalai Lama should have concluded their studies (*Da Qing huidian shili*,

Guangxu edition, 1899, *juan* 992, 15a).[1] What would be the appointments of these graduated officials? Would these students become the Ambans in Tibet? Would they be interpreters for Tibetan tribute missions to Beijing? Would these students, after obtaining their qualifications, serve within the translation offices of the Qing court: the Office of Translators (the *Siyi guan* 四譯館, founded in 1407, under the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the Office of Interpreters (the *Huitong guan* 會同館), or the School of Combined Learning, also called the Imperial College (the *Tongwen guan* 同文館 founded in 1862 to conduct translation with Western languages and train diplomats)? None of these three translation offices, which existed during the Qing dynasty, seems to have had a direct link with the Court of Border Affairs: they were part of other organs. The Office of Translators was part of the Hanlin yuan (翰林院), the Office of Interpreters of the Ministry of Rites (*Libu* 禮部). Both were created to train translators and interpreters of Asian languages, Tibetan included (Ross 1908: 690). However, as the Office of Interpreters fell under the administration of the Minister of Rites, relations with the Court of Border Affairs should have existed because both offices were responsible for organising and receiving Tibetan missions to Beijing. They should no doubt have cooperated in the translation work carried out during these missions. But so far, we have no evidence of such cooperation. The Imperial College was incorporated within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Zongli yamen* 總理衙門) at the end of the dynasty. As a matter of fact, the Manchu dynasty took the matter of translation very seriously, not only because it was a dynasty of foreign origin but also because of the extent of its Empire. The importance of the translation is evident from the fact that special licences and doctoral exams were organised for translators throughout the duration of the dynasty (Pelliot 1948: 229).

However, despite the existence of these administrative organs dedicated to translation within the Qing government, it was the assistant teacher of the "Office Dedicated to the Study of Tibetan" that was not only in charge of teaching but also of translating orders of the Emperor to the Dalai Lama, as noted in the *Da Qing huidian shili*, Guangxu edition, 1899, *juan* 992, 14b. What are we to make of this sole occurrence of the translation of a Manchu document into Tibetan by this individ-

[1] A Russian college (*Eluosi wenguan* 俄羅斯文館) was set up by the Court of Border Affairs in 1708.

ual? And then what kinds of documents were translated? Who checked the translations? Were all the translations made in Beijing because of the existence of these colleges? How did these translated Manchu Court orders go through the Amban *yamen*? How were these Qing imperial orders communicated to the Tibetan government? What were the channels of communication between the global and the local for the translated documents? The fact is that translation was the mode of exchange between the Manchu Emperor (Beijing, one of the Manchu Empire capitals) and the Dalai Lama (Lhasa, the Tibetan capital).

... TO THE LOCAL

This overview regarding translation within the Manchu government sketched out above, and still in need of clarification, represents the perspective of the Manchu capital and government, and is counterbalanced by the documents representing the local level.

The local here should be understood from various angles, the first being geographic. Lhasa is far from Beijing: the Tibetan government is a long way from the Beijing government without even taking into consideration any kind of subordination of the local to the global or a direct link of domination and control from the global to the local. But Tibet was part of the Manchu Empire, and as such could be considered as local because of its geographic position compared with Beijing, where the Manchu chose to establish the government of their Empire, and which became the centre of this Empire. Far from being trivial, this geographical observation is relevant for questions about the transmission of documents—that is to say the circulation of the translations—especially for those made in Tibet that needed approval from Beijing. On the other hand, the distance could justify the appointment of an agent who understood Tibetan or an interpreter/translator at the Manchu *yamen* in Lhasa. So, were the translations made in Lhasa or in Beijing? Did all translated documents circulate between Lhasa and Beijing? Who were the local translators? Were the translations made in Lhasa sent to Beijing to be revised and then approved by the Emperor? If so, who then were the censors of the translations that were made in Tibet? Or is it possible that the Manchu agents in Lhasa were authorised to implement a Tibetan version of imperial regulations that were not subject to final approval by the Emperor?

Another angle would be to envisage the local exclusively in terms of Manchu administration: the Emperor was at the head of a government whose ramifications extended far from his Beijing base. As such, the Amban, the Manchu high commissioner nominated to serve in Tibet for a three-year period, or the special envoy named to resolve a conflict, was or could be considered as a local official—not a minor one, since the Ambans were high officials—working for the Beijing government. He was responsible for the exchange of documents between both governments and relied on other local officials—among them translators and interpreters—for his task (Petech 1950: 205).

What remains even more obscure is the way the documents circulated locally. What kinds of documents were transmitted from the Tibetan government to the Office of the Amban (*Zhu Zang banshi dachen yamen* 駐藏辦事大臣 衙門) and *vice versa*? Who was responsible for the choice of documents within both governments? For example, from the *Narrative of Youtai's Soujourn in Tibet* (*Youtai zhu Zang riji* 有泰駐藏日記), the translator or interpreter of the Tibetan government brought one document to the Amban, the Amban received it and immediately passed it on for translation (*Youtai: juan* 3, 17; *juan* 5, 5; *juan* 5, 6). This information is given without any details about the expectation, the content, or the importance of the documents or about the translators. Does this mean that every document issued by the Tibetan government was transmitted to the Amban and then translated? What happened in the case of Manchu documents concerning Tibet? Did they arrive in Lhasa from Beijing already translated into Tibetan? Did the Manchu *yamen* take charge of the translation process? Was the Manchu document given in its original form and language to the Tibetan government?

The same structural questions could be asked of the Tibetan government. Among them: how were the translation activities carried out within the Tibetan government? Who were the translators? Who took the decision to transmit a given document? Such an analysis from the Tibetan side should be possible for the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth thanks to the Western travel accounts and through the Sino-Tibetan Buddhists exchange channels, but not from archives related to the eighteenth century that are still so difficult to obtain. But going to the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century—for example with the analysis of the implementation of the Manchu ordinances of 1844 and 1907 regarding Tibet—would entail widening the scope of our analysis and opening

our studies onto an even larger global frame. The international context was totally different from that of the eighteenth century because of the arrival and settlement of Westerners within the Manchu Empire that ended with the foundation of a new translation office and of a new Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing.

In any event, the sources that provide the answers to so many questions combine the global and the local. They are to be found in archives—mainly Chinese, but also Tibetan: diaries of some of the Manchu agents named in Tibet, and biographies of Tibetan officials, although information about the translation and communication process is obviously very scarce within these archives.

THE IN-BETWEEN: A CASE STUDY

Both the global and the local are implied in the analysis of the elaboration of the Manchu Imperial Rules regarding Central Tibet that were implemented during the eighteenth century (specifically, in 1750, 1789, 1790 and 1793). As an example I will focus on the analysis of the "Ordinance for the More Efficient Governing of Tibet" dated 1793—that I have studied from other perspectives (Jagou 2011 and forthcoming)—for practical reasons: I have already read and translated a huge amount of published archival material related to it, without counting unpublished works examined in the National Palace Museum Archives in Taipei. For scientific reasons, this document is at the origin of my research on the governmental translation process between China and Tibet, and reveals our ignorance concerning the elaboration and the implementation of the Manchu rules in Tibet.

This imperial edict was prepared after the two Gorkha Wars, respectively of 1788–1789 (which was unresolved) and of 1791.

How could the global intervene in the Tibetan formulation of the Manchu imperial edict of 1793? My first attempt to answer this question would be to cite the nomination of Manchu officials able to speak and write Tibetan. My second answer would be to point to the establishment of fast and efficient channels of communication between the local and the global. Here I will concentrate on the criteria that determined the nomination of the Manchu officials in Tibet, and raise the question of whether knowledge of the Tibetan language was a prerequisite within the scope of the 1793 ordinance.

Bilingualism perceived as an obstacle (from the global

From the correspondence between Lhasa and Beijing related to the inconclusive nature of the first Gorkha War (1788–1789), the bilingualism of the then Amban, Bazhong (巴忠, in Tibet from 1788 to 1789) has been cited as possible factor. As a Tibetan speaker, Bazhong was blamed by the Manchu authorities for being too close to rDo ring Pandita (born in 1760), the Tibetan minister in charge of the negotiations with the Gorkhas in the name of the Tibetan government. They even went so far as to blame him for the negative influence he exerted on the Tibetan minister by communicating with him directly (Duojie Caidan 1994: doc. 892, Report from Fu Kang'an, 14th February 1792). No indication is given about how Bazhong learned Tibetan, and whether this knowledge of the language had made him eligible for nomination to serve in Tibet.

In fact, knowledge of the Tibetan language does not appear to have been a prerequisite at all, as can be seen from the subsequent discussions regarding the selection of the next Amban: criteria such as knowledge of borders affairs, prior experience as Manchu Amban in Lhasa, or else personal connections were taken into account. Finally, it was high officials of the Empire who were chosen (Duojie Caidan 1994: doc. 894, Memorandum from Fu Kang'an to the Dalai Lama, 18th February 1792; doc. 903, Order of the Grand Secretariat, 22nd March 1792; doc. 894, Memorandum from Fu Kang'an to the Dalai Lama, 18th February 1792). Knowledge of the Tibetan language was clearly not a criterion for nomination as an Amban in Tibet: it was rather something to be avoided in order not to allow too much proximity between Manchu and Tibetan officials in Lhasa. However, this does not mean that Tibetan cultural features were systematically brushed aside among the criteria of nomination: for example, an official was turned down because he was not a Buddhist follower (Duojie Caidan 1994: doc. 903, order of the Grand Secretariat, 22nd March 1792).

If the Ambans were not supposed to speak Tibetan, did Fu Kang'an (福康安, Man: Fu K'anggan, 1753–1796), the special administrator in charge of the elaboration of the imperial edict in 1792–1793, speak Tibetan himself? Of course he was not subject to the same criteria as those that applied to the Ambans: he was a brilliant general on many Manchu campaigns (Jinchuan in 1776, Gansu in 1784, and Taiwan in 1787) before being credited with having expelled the Gorkha army from

Tibet in 1792 (Richardson 1974: 27–39; Boulnois 1983). He was also known as a provincial governor (Yunnan and Guizhou 1780–1781; 1794–1795), Sichuan (1781–1783; 1793–1794), Shaanxi and Gansu (1784–1788), Fujian and Zhejiang (1788–1789; 1795), Guangdong and Guangxi (1789–1793)—but with a bad reputation (Jagou 2007)! Most important of all, Fu Kang'an was a member of the yellow banner, the imperial clan, and he had personal connections with the Emperor. He also had personal links with the officials who were nominated to serve in Tibet in 1792, and all had connections with Heshen (和珅, 1750–1799), Grand Councillor and favourite of the Qianlong Emperor. Fu Kang'an and Heshen belonged to the same banner (after Qianlong had promoted Heshen from the red banner to the yellow) and Fu Kang'an succeeded Heshen on the Gansu campaign. Helin (和琳, d. Sep. 1796), the new Amban, was the younger brother of Heshen (1750–1799). Sun Shiyi (1720–1796) was a member of the Heshen group and he followed Fu Kang'an to Vietnam (1789). Sun Shiyi and Huiling (惠齡) were responsible for the rations of the troops during the 1792 campaign within Tibet.

Within the nomination process, the global—in the form of the highest authorities of the Empire—determined the resolution of the local. But then, who was able to act as translator or interpreter during the preparation of the 1793 edict? The sources are almost silent on that subject, and the best we can do is to draw inferences from them. It is clear, for example, that when Fu Kang'an met the 8th Dalai Lama (1758–1804), he was sometimes accompanied by a Manchu official (Sun Shiyi), but the documents are silent about Sun Shiyi's capacities as interpreter or translator for Tibetan. Among the Manchu officials resident in Lhasa with Fu Kang'an, Ehui was able to translate documents written in Tibetan (Duojie Caidan 1994: doc. 900, 22nd March 1792, report from Fu Kang'an specifying that Ehui translated a letter from rDo ring Paṇḍita to the Dalai Lama), but the role of translator was not one of his official duties.

Bilingualism as a necessity (from the local)

Locally, bilingualism was a necessity for communication with the Tibetan officials and for making Tibetan translations of Manchu documents. Communication between Fu Kang'an and the Dalai Lama was established and, according to Fu Kang'an, the Dalai Lama was part of

the negotiations regarding the elaboration of the document and the Dalai Lama accepted it (Duojie Caidan 1994, Memorandum from Fu Kang'an to Qianlong, 29th November 1792).

As the imperial edict had been written in Lhasa, employees, acting as translators within the Manchu *yamen*, should have been in charge of the translation, but their names and function are not specified within any of the documents; nothing is mentioned in the archives about translators and interpreters working for the Tibetan government.

Conclusion

Relations between the Manchu Empire and Tibet passed through translations and translators. Translation might therefore be seen as a mode of exchange not only in terms of practice (the local) but also in terms of meaning (the global).

The practice, that is to say the use and the impact of a translated document locally, could be discussed so as to determine which document prevails: was it the original document or its translated version? Importance should be given to the analysis of the elaboration and conclusion of a final translated version of a Manchu imperial edict into Tibetan. The channel of communication of translated documents should be known in order to elaborate on a possible revision of the translation work in Beijing and then an approval of the final translation document by the Emperor. Otherwise, what can be said, ultimately, about the value of a Qing regulation for Tibet that has been translated into Tibetan locally but not revised in Beijing and approved by the Emperor?

The meaning could be tentatively examined mainly in the event that both language versions—at least Manchu and Tibetan—of an ordinance existed. It would then be possible to analyse their "reciprocity of meaning-value" (Liu 1999: 4) and perhaps even how Manchu political ideas were understood by Tibetans. Beyond the scope of the Imperial ordinances with a kind of standardised translation vocabulary, Tibetan documents without Manchu or Chinese originals emanating from the Office of the Amban show other aspects of Manchu-Tibetan relations. At first glance, a real Manchu-Tibetan communication for the elaboration of a new policy for Tibet emerges with a circulation from the global to the local. But on a second reading, the Tibetan vocabulary used

shows that the Manchu agent was aware of the Tibetan administrative procedures for communication in implementing a new policy. In this case, the circulation would be plural with constant interactions between the global and the local, with the tacit aim of making a Manchu policy look like a Tibetan policy, or at least render Manchu policy acceptable to Tibetans (see the text analysed by Kalsang Norbu Gurung in this volume).

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ON THE EDITION, STRUCTURE, AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE *WEIZANG TONGZHI*

LIU YUXUAN

It was not until the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) that Tibetan *difangzhi* (gazetteers)[1] compiled in Chinese first appeared. Before that time, the overwhelming volume of literature concerning Tibet, irrespective of history, geography, culture, customs, religion, ethics and so forth, had been entered into official history books. The estimated number of surviving Chinese monographs on Tibet written since the Tang dynasty is around thirty (Zhang Lihong 2005: 131), most of them composed during the Qing dynasty. The first Qing dynasty monograph on Tibet classified as a gazetteer is the work entitled *Zangjigai* (A brief description of Tibet)[2] compiled by Li Fengcai and proofread by Kuifeng shanren,[3]

[1] *Difangzhi* (lit. gazetteer) is a genre of Chinese historical records which covers areas such as history, geography, culture, people, products, and so on, as comprehensively as possible. It focuses on an administrative prefecture, a geographical district, even a country (NB: I use "gazetteer" to stand for the term *difangzhi* in my paper). China has a long history and fine tradition of compiling gazetteers. Moreover, the majority of gazetteers were compiled under the supervision of local officials, with the fundamental purpose of recording local history. Therefore, to some extent, we can treat the gazetteers as periodical but progressive historical records—this means there have always been modifications and supplements in the gazetteers. Even till now the government in every administrative district, from highest to lowest, will organise officials to compile the gazetteers. In general, the gazetteers can be classified into two subgenres: comprehensive history (*tongshi*) and dynastic history (*duandaishi*). The *Weizang tongzhi*, discussed here, belongs to the *tongshi* genre (comprehensive history). For further research on the Chinese gazetteers see Brook 1988, especially part II.

[2] Chinese terms and names are given in Pinyin transcription, Tibetan in Wylie transliteration, Manchu according to Erich Hauer (1952), and Mongolian according to Nikolas Poppe (2006).) Meanwhile, the Chinese-Western calendar conversion is based on Qingdai Zhongxi Libiao (1980).

[3] *Zangjigai* (A brief description of Tibet) contains three chapters (*juan*). Its records end in the 5th year under the reign of the Yongzheng emperor (1727). Two persons named Xiujiang tiechuan jushi and Wuling kuifeng shanren both appeared in the beginning of every chapter as compilers. According to the research of the modern Chinese scholar Wu Fengpei, Xiujiang tiechuan jushi is Li Fengcai. (cf. the postscript of Wu Fengpei collected into *Zangjigai*, 1988), who styled himself as Tingyi (*zi*) and Tiechuan (*hao*), from Jianchang (i.e. today's Yongxiu), Jiangxi. He was a *wu juren* (people who have succeeded the imperial examination for the selection of military officers) in the 53rd year under the reign of the Kangxi emperor (1714) and was sent to Tibet to suppress riots.

during the reign of the Yongzheng emperor.[4] Nevertheless, of all the gazetteers compiled in the earlier stages of the Qing dynasty—taking the Jiaqing era (1795–1820) as dividing line—, the *Weizang tongzhi* undoubtedly has a position of vital importance from the perspective of academic research, because of the extensive information it provides on Tibet. The work preserves more historical and archival materials from before the end of the Jiaqing era than the other gazetteer, especially the meticulous and comprehensive accounts about the war between Tibet (and the Qing) and the Gorkhas (1788–1792). The purpose of this paper is to introduce this Chinese historical source, the *Weizang tongzhi*, with particular reference to its editing, structure, and authorship.

THE EDITION OF THE *WEIZANG TONGZHI*

The *Weizang tongzhi* was virtually unknown because it existed only as a manuscript, now preserved in the library of Beijing University.[5] Only in the second half of the 19th century, when Yuan Chang[6] included it in his private family book collection series called *jianxi cunshe*, did it become widely known.[7] However, he made a rather radical adjustment, especially with regard to the rearrangement of the whole book. Long

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However, the author of the Zangjigai, namely Wuling kuifeng shanren, is still unknown (See Zhao Xinyu 2013: 185).

[4] There are two different viewpoints on the first Tibetan gazetteer: the first treats *Zangjigai* as the earlier, since it was compiled in Yongzheng's time according to the latest date recorded on it (see Zhao Xinyu 2013: 185; *Zhongguo difangzhi lianhe mulu* 1985: 849); the other viewpoint is that Xizang zhi is the first; it was written in the name of Guo qinwang (namely Prince Guo, whose name is Yunli, the 17th son of the Kangxi emperor), very likely between the end of the reign of the Yongzheng and the beginning of the Qianlong period, which has a version published under the sponsorship of He Ning (see He Jinwen 1985: 1–3.) Based on the date of the end of the compilation and also on the strength of research carried out in China, I have adopted the first viewpoint.

[5] I have not yet been able to obtain access to that manuscript, but am currently trying to secure a copy.

[6] Yuan Chang (1846–1900), who styled himself Zhongli (*zi*) and Shuangqiu (hao), was from Tonglu, Zhejiang. He held an official position in the Qing court up to the position of Taichangsi qing, the highest official in charge of ritual and ceremony at the ancestral temple. For further details, see Hummel 1964: 945–48).

[7] The vogue for making private book collections began in the Song dynasty, even though this kind of personal activity was on a rather small scale in comparison with official compilations.

Jidong,[8] at the request of Yuan Chang, did the job of proof-reading. He finished it in the 21st year of Guangxu's reign (1895) and published it as a separate reprint the following year (1896). From then on, the *Weizang tongzhi* was noted by scholars. It was reprinted twice after it had been included in these *jianxi cunshe* series. The two reprints have sixteen chapters (*juan*) each, with chapter headings: one comprises six volumes bound in one box and the other eight volumes in one box. This means that the only difference between the two is the package. Thereafter, the three different block-printed versions, easily accessible to scholars today, are all based on the version from the abovementioned *jianxi cunshe* series. In the present article I shall focus only on these three different versions. The three are as follows:

Edition I, included in the *Congshu jicheng chubian* series, the chief editor of which was Wang Yunwu.
Title: *Weizang tongzhi*
Author/compiler: author unknown (*zhuanren weixiang*)
Publisher: Shanghai: Commercial Press (Shangwu Yinshuguan)
Typography: vertical typesetting, basic pauses and printed in traditional Chinese characters.
Publication Year: 1936

Edition II, included in the series of Tibetan Studies together with *Xizang zhi* from page 126 to 565.
Title: *Weizang tongzhi*
Author/compiler: Song Yun
Publisher: Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing House (Xizang Renmin Chubanshe)
Typography: vertical typesetting, punctuation and printed in simplified Chinese characters.
Publication Year: 1982

Edition III, included in the *Xuxiu siku quanshu* series under the catalogue entry for history (shibu), subcatalogue geography (*dililei*)
Title: [*Jiaqing*] *Weizang tongzhi*
Author/compiler: anon. (*yiming zuanxiu*)
Publisher: Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House (*Shanghai Guji Chubanshe*)
Typography: facsimile publication of the block-printed version of the year of *bingshen* under the Guangxu reign (1896), vertical typesetting, double-column per folio, and printed in traditional Chinese characters.
Publication Year: 2002

[8] Long Jidong (1845–1900), who styled himself Songcen (*zi*) from Guilin, was good at composing poems and proofreading ancient books.

It is hard to say which version is the best because the versions we now have were changed substantially by the editor, Long Jidong. However, from the point of accuracy and reliability, there is no doubt that the facsimile version (Edition III) is the best. It should be emphasised that the literature collected in the *Xuxiu siku quanshu* series has been praised as the best edition in all of China.

By contrast, for Editions I and II, scholars have done the work of introducing pauses and punctuation, and have even simplified the traditional Chinese characters, in order to facilitate an understanding of traditional Chinese works in a relatively short time. In spite of this, we should bear in mind that adding punctuation is already a kind of interpretation, and errors have been introduced into both Editions I and II with regard to Tibetan toponyms, among others. Since Chinese authors usually used Chinese characters to record the names of peoples or places in non-Chinese languages, the names are often hard to identify and errors occur rather frequently. A version containing simplified Chinese characters and additional punctuation may be convenient for reading and for preliminary research, but for citation and further research the published facsimile version is clearly preferable.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE *WEIZANG TONGZHI*

The fact of inclusion in the the *jianxi cunshe* series represents a landmark in the history of the *Weizang tongzhi*. Therefore, I separate the different versions into two groups: the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi* (i.e. the manuscript preserved in the library of Beijing University)[9] and the later, numbered *Weizang tongzhi* editions (i.e. Editions I, II and III). All the available published versions of the *Weizang tongzhi* are organised into 16 consecutively numbered chapters. To each is attached a chapter heading, provided by the editor Long Jidong. Fortunately, however, the catalog of the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi* is retained in the numbered *Weizang tongzhi*. We can see that there are seven categories in the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi* regardless of the volume: *fangyu* (geography), *sengsu* (monks and laymen), *zhenfu* (the responsibilities of central officials), *jinglüe* (administration), *waibu* (external

[9] I am currently obliged to use the records of the old categories preserved in the rearranged versions. Once I have obtained the older manuscript preserved at Beijing University, I also will compare the contents of the two groups.

affairs), *yiwen* (literature and art), and *jingdian* (sutras).[10] Each category is further divided into subcategories.

In order to show how many changes to the arrangement have been made, I list the catalogues of the non-numbered and the numbered *Weizang tongzhi* below.

Former arrangement (irrespective of volume):

1. The category of geography (*fangyu*)
- textual research (*kaozheng*)
- territory (*jiangyu*)
- topography (*shanchuan*)
- routes and stations (*chengzhan*)
2. The category of monks and laymen (*sengsu*)
- lamas (*lama*)
- monasteries and temples (*simiao*)
- Tibetan nationalities and tribes (*fanzu*)
- Tibetan officials (*fanguan*)
- Tibetan soldiers (*fanbing*)
- households and population (*hukou*)
3. The category of the responsibilities of central officials (*zhenfu*)
- the organisation system (*zhizhang*)
- regulations regarding currencies (*qianfa*)
- trade (*maoyi*)
- battalions and troops (*yingwu*)
- regulations (*zhangcheng*)
4. The category of administration (*jinglüe*)
- Kangxi
- Yongzheng
- Qianlong
5. The category of external affairs (*waibu*)
- Damu Mongolia (*damu menggu*)
- the 39 clans (*sanshijiu zu*)
- the tribes surrounding Tibet (*sifang waifan*)
6. The category of literature and art (*yiwen*)
- literary works and inscriptions by emperors (*yuzhi beiwen*)
- poems and prose (*shiwen*)
- odes (*fu*)
7. The category of classical Buddhist texts (*jingdian*)
- sutras (*jingdian*)

[10] According to the accounts of the bibliophile Li Shengduo, the *Weizang tongzhi* preserved at Beijing University contains six categories instead of seven (Li Shengduo 1985: 138). The category of sutras (*jingdian*) does not exist in the manuscript described by Li Shengduo. I cannot tell which manuscript, Li Shengduo's or Yuan Chang's, is the earlier.

Later arrangement (arranged in 16 consecutively-numbered *juan*):

chapter heading, newly added (*juanshou xinbian*)
[imperial poems and articles (*yuzhi shiwen*)]
juan 1: textual research (*kaozheng*)
juan 2: territory (*jiangyu*)
juan 3: topography (*shanchuan*)
juan 4: routes and stations (*chengzhan*)
juan 5: lamas (*lama*)
juan 6: monasteries and temples (*simiao*)
juan 7: regulations concerning Tibetan officials (*fanmu*)
juan 8: military systems (*bingzhi*)
juan 9: the responsibilities of central officials (*zhenfu*)
juan 10: regulations concerning currencies (*qianfa*)
juan 11: trade (*maoyi*)
juan 12: ordinances (*tiaoli*)
juan 13: central administration (*jilüe*)
juan 14: reduction of taxation, corvée, etc. (*fuxu*)
juan 15: tribes (*buluo*)
juan 16: classical Buddhist texts/sutras (*jingdian*)

The following chart shows the differences in the arrangement of the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi* and the numbered *Weizang tongzhi*.

Former arrangement		Later arrangement
fangyu	*kaozheng*	*juan* 1 *kaozheng*
	jiangyu	*juan* 2 *jiangyu*
	shanchuan	*juan* 3 *shanchuan*
	chengzhan	*juan* 4 *chengzhan*
sengsu	*lama*	*juan* 5 *lama*
	simiao	*juan* 6 *simiao*
	fanzu	NB: missing
	fanguan	*juan* 7 *fanmu* (NB: title change)
	fanbing	*juan* 8 *bingzhi* (NB: title change)
	hukou	NB: missing

Former arrangement		Later arrangement
zhenfu	*zhizhang*	*juan* 9 *zhenfu* (NB: title change)
	qianfa	*juan* 10 *qianfa*
	maoyi	*juan* 11 *maoyi*
	yingwu	NB: partially missing and the remaining three parts subtitled *yingguanquefen, luying, fanying* and moved into *juan* 12
	zhangcheng	*juan* 12 tiaoli (NB: title change)
jinglüe	Kangxi	*juan* 13 *jilüe* (NB: title change)
	Yongzheng	
waibu	*damu menggu*	*juan* 15 *buluo* (NB: title change)
	sanshijiu zu	
	sifang waifan	
yiwen	*yuzhi beiwen*	*juanshou* (NB: title change)
	shiwen	
	fu	NB: missing
jingdian	*jingdian*	*juan* 16 *jingdian*
		juan 14 *fuxu* (NB: new addition)

A comparison of the arrangement in the two cases shows that the numbered *Weizang tongzhi* varies considerably from the non-numbered version.

First, the numbered *Weizang tongzhi*'s sequences have been rearranged and chapter numbers added, while the organisation of the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi* has no volume number, but instead different categories and sub-categories. Most of the subcategories which were subsumed under various categories in the non-numbered *Weizang*

tongzhi have now been listed as separate chapters. A few of them have been altered to other titles, such as *juan* 7: regulations concerning Tibetan officials (*fanmu*), *juan* 8: military systems (*bingzhi*), *juan* 9: responsibilities of central officials (*zhenfu*), *juan* 12: ordinances (*tiaoli*), *juan* 13: central administration (*jilüe*), and the addition of chapter headings (*juanshou*) to replace the following subheadings: Tibetan officials (*fanguan*), Tibetan soldiers (*fanbing*), the organisation system (*zhizhang*), regulations (*zhangcheng*), the category of administration (*jinglüe*), and the category of literature and art (*yiwen*).

Secondly, in the numbered *Weizang tongzhi* the heading of literature and art (*yiwen*) has been abandoned, and the contents of this section have been rearranged into different chapters. Moreover, the poems, articles, and inscriptions written by the Qing emperors that were originally subsumed in the category literature and art (*yiwen*) have been rearranged. Thus, a new chapter heading (*juanshou*) has been added.

Thirdly, *juan* 14: reduction of taxation, corvée, etc. (*fuxu*)[11] is a new addition that did not exist in the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi* at all. That means that this chapter was added by Long Jidong, who acted as proof-reader and compiler of the *Weizang tongzhi* at the request of Yuan Chang, the owner of the *jianxi cunshe* series. In the catalogue of *juan* 14 there is a remark under the title to the effect that this chapter did not exist in the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi*: "[It] was not listed in the catalogue. Today [we] add it as new chapter and separate it into two sub-*juan*".[12]

Fourthly, in the non-numbered *Weizang tongzhi* entire subcategories or parts of the contents are missing. Among these are the subcategories Tibetan nationalities and tribes (*fanzu*), as well as households and population (*hukou*) under the category of monks and laymen (*sengsu*), and the subcategory odes (*fu*) under the category of literature and art (*yiwen*), and parts of the content in the subcategory of battalions and troops (*yingwu*) under the category of the responsibilities of central officials (*zhenfu*).

An important part of the *Weizang tongzhi*, placed before the main text, is called "*the synopsis of Weizang tongzhi*" (*Weizang tongzhi tiyao*).[13] Its 41 items guide the reader through the compilation of the *Weizang tongzhi*. Furthermore, the information given in "the synopsis

[11] Edition I: 327–87; Edition II: 449–502; Edition III: 203a–252a.

[12] The Chinese original texts is: 原未列入门类今新编入分为上下二卷. (Edition I: 2; Edition II: 128; Edition III: 1b).

[13] See Edition I: 1–4; Edition II: 129–31; Edition III: 2b–3b.

of *Weizang tongzhi*" provides some clues about the time of its completion and the authorship. Chinese scholars therefore make use of this synopsis to support their arguments concerning the authorship of the work. I will return to this question in the last part of the present article.

The translation of the 41 items listed in "*the synopsis of Weizang tongzhi*" is as follows:[14]

1. As references, [we should] include all documents and stories concerning Tibetan Buddhism written since the Han and Tang Dynasties in types of *shijian*, *leihan*, and *zashu*.[15]
2. An old Tibetan manuscript obtained in Chengdu in the year of wushen[16] in which are recorded various aspects of Tibet such as routes and stations (*chengtu*), customs and traditions (*fengtu*), topography (*shanchuan*), and so on. Therefore, we should select from it and arrange them according to other categories.
3. The *Weizang tushi*, which recorded territory (*jiangyu*), geography (*xingsheng*), mileage (*daoli*), monasteries (*siyuan*), customs (*fengsu*), and products (*wuchan*) quite well, should also be included and registered.
4. Translate [the parts about] the origins and evolvements of the Potala (Budala), Tashi lhunpo (Zhashilunbu; Tib. bKra shis lhun po) and other monasteries from the book which registered the items of ethnic groups (*fance*) and meanwhile register the newly-built monasteries after ascertainment.
5. The lineages and origins of the Dalai Lama (Dalailama), the Panchen Erdeni (Banchan eerdeni) and every *ho-thog-thu qubilyan* (*hutuketu hubierhan*)[17] should be singled out as a category.
6. The documents concerning the Gorkha invasion since the 53rd year under the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1788).
7. The files about Gorkha's intrusion which recorded the whole story from inception to surrender since the 56th year under the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1791).
8. All memoranda to the throne submitted by the Great General (Da jiangjun)[18] Fu Kang'an, the Imperial Envoy (Qinchai) He Lin, and the

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[14] I have added numbers, which are not present in the original texts, for the sake of convenience.

[15] *Shijian*, *leihan*, and *zashu* are the way to categorise historical materials and books based on purpose of compilation in China.

[16] The year of *wushen* is the 53rd year under the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1788).

[17] Concerning the Chinese characters of *hutuketu*, Editions I and III are 呼圖克圖 while Edition II has 瑚圖克圖 due to the same pronunciation of 呼 and 瑚.

[18] This was a temporary military position, set up only during times of war, but it was the highest during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

first rank of civil officials during the Qing dynasty (Daxueshi) Sun Shiyi, and the issues on the rehabilitation [after the war] since the 56th year under the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1791).

9. Imperial edicts since the 56th year under the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1791).

10. The original memorials submitted to the emperor from the Great General Fu Kang'an and the Imperial Envoy He Lin which concern delimiting borders and establishing landmarks (*ebo*).[19]

11. The origins of hereditary noble titles in Tibet, such as duke (Gongjue), Taiji,[20] and so on.

12. The rules relating to officials' ranks (*pinji*) and emoluments (*fengduan*) below the rank of *gabulun* (Tib. *bka' blon*),[21] and the regulations on officials' promotion and transfer (*shengdiao*).

13. Inscriptions [should be included, such as] the stele erected during Tang times (*tangbei*), the inscription made in Kangxi's time, the inscription about his ten achievements written by the Qianlong emperor (*qianlong yuzhi shiquanji bei*), two inscriptions in the Guandi temple (*guandimiao bei*) situated on Mopan Mountain (Mopan shan) in the city of Tashi lhunpo (Zhashi cheng; Tib. bKra shis lhun po), the inscriptions in the Jo khang temple (*dazhao jigong bei*), the inscriptions in gTsang district (*houzang bei*), the inscriptions on the stele advising people to be inoculated against smallpox (*quanrenxu chudou bei*), and the bulletin on forbidding the custom of sky burial (*jinzhi tiandizang jiuxi gaoshi*).

14. About the *jingzhong ci*,[22] [we should] ascertain the names of men who died in the line of duty and then honour them in the temple.

15. [We should] establish a school which teaches the languages of Gorkha (*kuofan*), Chinese (*hanwen*), Tibetan (*tanggute*), and Manchu (*manwen*).

16. Regulations concerning the drilling of Tibetan and Chinese troops.

17. The paper and tributes proposed by the king of the Gorkha which express his gratitude [to the emperor].

18. Memoranda from the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni which show their gratitude [to the throne].

19. The brief history of every tribe near the borders.

20. The names of tribes and clans from Dajianlu (Tib. Dar rtse mdo) to *zang* (Tib. gTsang).

[19] *Ebo* is Mongolian *obuga/oboo*, transcribed in Chinese, and denoting cairns surmounted with flags.

[20] Taiji is derived from Chinese Taizi (crown prince), and was a title of Mongolian Chingiside nobles. The Qing empire inherited it in order to grant it to noble chieftains of Mongolian and other ethnic groups in northwestern China.

[21] Gabulun (Tib. *bka' blon*)—full name gagonglun (Tib. *bka' gung blon*)—were the ministers in the Tibetan central government's cabinet (Tib. *bka' shag*), which consisted of three lay officials and one monk official.

[22] *Jingzhong ci* denotes the memorial temple for honouring those who served and died for the empire.

21. The names of mountains and rivers, places, people, and officials should be transcribed in accordance with the Tibetan language.
22. The number of the forts and checkpoints where *luying bianbing*[23] are stationed.
23. The number of horses and soldiers for defence in every local district (*tang*).
24. The duties of civilian officials (*wenyuan*) serving in the Liangtai.[24]
25. The duties of *siyuan* (a generic term for civil officials), secretaries (*bitieshi*),[25] and *liangyuan* (officials serving in Liangtai and responsible for provisions) in Tibet.
26. The affairs of the treasury (*baozang ju*), notably minting coins by melting metals.
27. Official travel documents (*guanji lupiao*; Tib. *Lam yig*) [issued to] those who were eligible to make demands on transport and trade among tribes.
28. The regulations of corvée duties (*wula*; Tib. *'u lag*) that Tibetan people in different places have to render.
29. Matters concerning Tibetan (*tanggute*) chieftains who hold responsibility.
30. The categories of commodities transported between the tribes and Central Tibet.
31. The names and geographical features of localities (*shanchuan*) in Tibet (Qianhouzang; Tib. dBus and gTsang) and the routes between stations (*tai*).
32. To establish [the system of] drawing lots from the Golden Urn (*benba ping*; Tib. *bum pa*) in order to identify reincarnations (*hubierhan*; Mong. *xubilgan*) by imperial decree.
33. The Taiji in Mongolia, to the north, are permitted to send people to Tibet with the purpose of *aocha*.[26]
34. [Regulations concerning] the *kanbu* (Tib. *mkhan po*) dispatched by the Dalai Lama (Dalailama) or the Panchen Erdeni (Banchan eerdeni) to present the annual tribute.
35. The goods for the yearly required awards should be provided from Sichuan (*chuangsheng*).
36. The transportation of goods such as money reserves (*xiangyin*), paper/stationery (*zhizha*), and so on should be carried out under escort from Sichuan [to Tibet] as usual.

[23] Under the Qing dynasty, *luying* refers to the armed forces formed by Han people in local districts and organised in the green banner, while *bianbing* is the generic term for low-ranking military officers and soldiers.

[24] Liangtai (commissary) is the official agency which managed army provisions in military operations during the Qing Dynasty.

[25] *Bitieshi* originated from Mongolian *bičiḫči*, and is a person in charge of translating memorials in Chinese and Manchu to the court.

[26] *Aocha* denotes the custom of donating money, tea, and the like, to monasteries by Tibetan Buddhist devotees.

37. There should be a category of miscellanea (*zazhui*) which includes Tibetan customs, men's and women's agricultural activities, people [inhabiting] *liuyu* (i.e. settling in places other than their home towns or villages) for every tribe, the activities of lamas, seasons and climates (jiehou), ceremonies (yizhu), regulations concerning expenses for the yamen of the Imperial Envoy (Qinchai yamen), and the yamen of civil servants and military officers (wenwu yamen).
38. The provision according to which the yamen of the Imperial Envoy (Qinchai yamen) should report all official business in detail, submit official documents (*zibao*) and seek advice from senior officials in the Dependency Office (Lifanyuan) and the Ministry of Revenue (Hubu) [should be included].
39. People who are dispatched by monks (*fanseng*) from Yunnan (*diansheng*), and hereditary headmen (*tusi*) in Kokonor Mongolia (Qinghai menggu) and Sichuan (*chuansheng*), etc., aiming to make donations and to study Buddhist scriptures, would get official travel documents (*lupiao*).
40. The number of officers and soldiers of 'Dam Mongolia (*damu menggu*).
41. The checkpoints set up along the routes running both north and west of *zang* (Tib. gTsang).

WHO COMPILED THE *WEIZANG TONGZHI*?

Since the *Weizang tongzhi*'s inclusion in the *jianxi cunshe* series and publication in 1896, the question of its authorship has been subject to a good deal of discussion. Opinions differ. Summarising the results of research by Chinese scholars, to the best of my knowledge there are five viewpoints on the matter of authorship.

1. Amban He Lin[27]

Yuan Chang gave this proposition in his epilogue, which is included in

[27] He Lin (1753–1796), who styled himself as Xizhai (*zi*), is from the Manchu Plain Red Banner (*zheng hongqi*). His family name is Niugulu shi (Manchu: Niohuru Hala/Niuhuru clan, one of the eight main Manchu family names). He is the younger brother of the notorious He Shen, the famous and powerful minister during the reign of the Qianlong emperor. He Lin started his official career as secretary in the Board of Rites (Libu *bitieshi*) in the 42nd year (1777) under the reign of the Qianlong emperor. He entered Tibet during the Qing-Gorkha war with the duty of providing logistical supplements, and was later promoted during the war. Thereafter he stayed in Tibet as Amban from the fourth Chinese leap month, 57th year to the eleventh Chinese month (23rd November to 21st December), 59th year (1792–1794) under the reign of Qianlong emperor (Ding Shicun 1948: 52–53). For further details see also Hummel 1964: 286–87).

the rearranged version of the *Weizang tongzhi*.[28] In the accounts of the epilogue of Yuan Chang, he quoted the viewpoint of Long Jidong: "The original manuscript hasn't the name of the author, but I suspect it was compiled by He Lin".[29] However, Yuan Chang's suggestion is mere speculation, and no supporting arguments are provided. We find the same situation in the book *The Catalog of Literature and Art Compiled by Eight Banners* (*Baqi yiwen bianmu*) compiled by En Hua (1867? –?) (En Hua 2006: 19).[30] He also cites He Lin as the author of *Weizang tongzhi*, but adds no explanatory statement.

A record in the *The Veritable Records of Emperors of Qing Gaozong* (*Qing Gaozong shilu*), usually cited by modern Chinese scholars, could be taken as evidence that Amban He Lin was the compiler of the *Weizang tongzhi*—or at least was one of several compilers (Cao Biaolin 2009: 79; Zhang Yuxin 1985: 105):

> Through scrupulous management and establishing regulations on Tibet by He Lin, every tribe is under control and Tibetan soldiers are being trained. All issues [to be] handled were carried out well. [I, the August Emperor] still order He Lin to instruct Song Yun in person with every detail [on Tibet] so that [Song Yun] can administer [Tibetan issues] according to the instructions, but in a more appropriate way in order to help the commission.[31] (*Qing Qaozong shilu, juan* 1457, n°27: 432a)

This decree, issued on the seventh Chinese lunar month (27th July to 25th August), 59th year (1794) of the Qianlong reign, was handed to Song Yun by Amban He Lin. According to the opinion of Zhang Yuxin, the *Weizang tongzhi* has been compiled just under this decree. However, He Lin was unable to complete the whole book due to other demands on his time, as he held the highest office in Tibet. Therefore, the actual work of compiling was finished by his assistant Amban He

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Biographical information about He Lin, Song Yun, and He Ning are principally based on the work of Ding Shicun.

[28] Edition I: 3; Edition II: 158; Edition III: 285b.

[29] The Chinese reads: "按此书系请前户部主事桂林龙松岑先生继栋校刻，伊未署名，详见先公文集中附记，并云原本未著姓氏，疑即为和琳所辑云".

[30] About En Hua and his achievements, see the introduction by Guan Jixian which was added as a preface to the *Baqi yiwen bianmu* and newly published in 2006: introduction: 1–9.

[31] The original texts in Chinese are "西藏地方，经和琳悉心整顿，定立章程，一切驾驭各部落，训练番兵，所办具有条理。仍著和琳再向松筠将巨细事宜面为告知，俾得循照成规经理，倍臻妥协，以副委任也".

Ning. I shall return to the viewpoint of Zhang Yuxin presently. However, his conclusion about the origin of compilation, based on this single decree, is barely convincing not least because it lacks any specific reference to the *Weizang tongzhi*, even though Zhang Yuxin gives the records of comments under the categories listed in the *Weizang tongzhi* to support his conclusion.

2. Amban Song Yun[32]

Wu Fengpei first proposed this viewpoint in 1936, and then reaffirmed his statement in his paper "On the author of *Weizang tongzhi*" (*Weizang tongzhi zhuzhe kao*) which was added to Edition II as an appendix (Wu Fengpei 1943: 567–70). Moreover, the editors of the *Series of Tibetan Studies* (*Xizang yanjiu congkan*)—*Weizang tongzhi* is a part of this series—adopted Wu Fengpei's viewpoint and directly put the name Song Yun together with the title *Weizang tongzhi* on the cover page. Wu Fengpei's viewpoint may be roughly summarised as follows:

> 1) Song Yun was good at book compilation and writing. He has left us several books about the frontier regions.
> 2) Wu Fengpei found a book entitled *A Rough Draft on the Western Borders* (*Xichui jishi chugao*), a manuscript composed during the reign of the Xianfeng and Tongzhi emperors (1851–1874) and attributed to "Changbai Song Yun". According to Wu's accounts, its contents are similar to the *Weizang tongzhi*, with the exception that it has a different arrangement and some minor repetitions.[33]
> 3) The *Weizang tongzhi* included materials collected after the 59th year

[32] Song Yun (1751/1752/1754? -1835), who styled himself Xiangpu (*zi*), is surnamed Malate shi (Manchu: Malara Hala) from the Mongolian Plain Blue Banner (*zheng lanqi*). He became secretary in the Dependency Office (Lifanyuan bitieshi) after taking the imperial examination, and began his official career from then on. He inherited the position as Amban from He Lin from the end of the 59th year of the Qianlong reign till the fourth year of the Jiaqing reign (1794–1799). Song Yun was a famous and legendary historical figure of the Qing dynasty who devoted himself to affairs in the northwest border areas. He also left several books that he either compiled or wrote himself. His official career culminated in the position of Minister of Junjichu (Ding Shicun 1948: 54–55). For further details, see Hummel 1964: 691–92.

[33] Regarding the *The rough draft on Xichui* (*Xichuan jishi chugao*), no one saw this book except Wu Fengpei. Although it was attributed to Changbai Song Yun, it is strange that Song Yun would have added—as a member of a Mongolian banner—Changbai before his name, because only Manchu people would have used this name of themselves (Zhang Yuxin 1985: 100).

of the Qianlong reign (1794) when Song Yun was holding the position of Amban while He Lin had already left.

3. Assistant Amban He Ning[34]

In his paper "*Weizang tongzhi de zhuzhe shi hening*" (The Author of Weizang Tongzhi is He Ning), Zhang Yuxin, the scholar mentioned above, states that He Ning was the one who completed the book. By way of supporting arguments Zhang Yuxin offers the time of compilation, personal relationship of He Ning with He Lin, his poems, and other evidence from the records in the *Weizang tongzhi*. In the first part of his paper, he discusses the arguments of Wu Fengpei and gives his own evidence in response. Moreover, we owe to the research of Zhang Yuxin a deeper insight into how the whole book was completed. The first draft was finished in the 59th year of Qianlong (1794), and the book itself was completed in the 2nd year of Jiaqing (1797) after continuous amendments, revisions and supplements. The *Weizang tongzhi* took three years to complete. The same point of view is also shared by Cao Biaolin based on a more meticulous study (Zhang Yuxin 1985: 103–104; Cao Biaolin 2009: 78–80).

4. Song Yun and He Ning

The argument is that as chief compilers, these two ordered their subordinates to implement the actual compilation of the book, and also participated in the compilation. This was another point of view temporarily held by Wu Fengpei in his paper *Jindai guoren zhuanshu zhi Xizang shiji* (Tibetan Historical Records Compiled by Chinese Scholars in Modern Times) written in 1943. He changed his original position on Song Yun, expressed in 1936, because he obtained another manuscript called *Fanjiang lanyao* (The Brief Introducation on Tibet)[35] by He

[34] He Ning (1741–1821), who styled himself as Runping and Tai'an, is surnamed Eledete shi (Manchu: Erket Hala) from the Mongolian Bordered Yellow Banner (*xiang huangqi*). He changed his name to He Ying because Yu'ning was the name of the Xuanzong emperor (i.e. the reign title Daoguang). It was a taboo for people to use the same characters in their names during the Qing dynasty. He was *jinshi* in the 36th year (1771) of the Qianlong era and then began his career as government official. He stayed in Tibet as vice Amban from the 59th year of the Qianlong reign to the 6th year of the Jiaqing reign (1794–1801) (Ding Shicun 1948: 54).

[35] I have been unable to find the books *Fanjiang lanyao* and *Xichui jishi chugao* mentioned by Wu Fengpei in his two papers. Other Chinese scholars, too, only cite these works indirectly by referring to Wu. As long as these books are not found, no conclusion can be reached.

Ning. In this book, according to Wu's paper, there was an author's preface recording that "I wrote Weizang tongzhi". However, when the Weizang tongzhi was reprinted by the Tibet People's Publishing House (Xizang renmin chubanshe) in 1982, Wu Fengpei abandoned this view, and reaffirmed his previous point of view of 1936 (Wu Fengpei 1982). It is possible that he doubted the reliability of the single statement in Fanjiang lanyao on the grounds that it lacked supporting evidence.

Based on the discussion among Chinese scholars, Dabringhaus (1994: 126) draws the conclusion that both Song Yun and He Ning are eligible as authors. However, she assumes that Song Yun as He Ning's superior (*banshi dachen*) was the editor, while He Ning as his assistant (*bangban dachen*) only participated in the compilation of the book (*ibid.*).

5. *Official activity*[36]

Nowadays most scholars support this view. Reading the whole book and checking the phraseology used in *Weizang tongzhi*, phrases like "so as to abide by (*yizhao zunshou*)", "in order to check (*yibian jiancha*)", etc., appear frequently. Based on this, it is believed that the majority of sources collected in the *Weizang tongzhi* are archival documents, because even the imperial comments were preserved well without changes or deletions. But on the premise of official activities, there remain diverse opinions:

5.1. An unfinished official book

The illustrious Chinese bibliophile Li Shengduo,[37] who published remarks and comments on his abundant collection of books, states that

[36] There were rules about how to sign an officially compiled gazetteer. Generally a local senior official is just a titular organiser. Thus, he is called *zhuxiuren*. When the senior official is in charge of organising and is also taking part in the compilation, he is called *zuanxiuren*. A junior official who actually composes the gazetteer is called *zuanzhe* or *zongzuan*. *Zhuxiuren* or *zuanxiuren* will sign with their names and will add the word *xiu* or *zuanxiu* because they bear the major responsibility for the compilation. Meanwhile the *zuanzhe* or *zongzuan* will write their names together with the word *zuan* which stands for minor responsibility (Li, Liu and Wang: 70–71). Therefore, for gazetteers compiled by officials, the name which is normally given does not refer to the people who actually completed the book, but to the person who took responsibility.

[37] Li Shengduo (1859–1934), who styled himself Yiqiao, Jiaowei, Muzhai, Shizi'an jiu zhuren, Shi'an jushi, Linjia jushi, etc., was awarded the title *jinshi* in the year of *jichou* under the Guangxu reign (1889). He was from Dehua, Jiangxi. Even during his career he devoted himself passionately to the collection of books.

the *Weizang tongzhi* was "an unfinished official book at that time (*dai dangshi weicheng zhi guanshu ye*)" (Li Shengduo 1985: 138), but fails to provide adequate evidence for this assertion. Prof. Xiangda, a famous Chinese scholar, described Li Shengduo's attitude on history books as follows:

> He devoted his full heart to book collation for decades as well, as if [the time he spent were just] one day. [When he obtained a book, he] would collate the book once, twice, even up to three or four times. He would abided by the way on collating ancient books according to the extremely strict procedure of the bibliophiles belonging to the branch of Suzhou, and he never drew his conclusions rashly.[38]

Why Li Shengduo, who held such a prudent attitude towards historical books, drew his conclusion on the *Weizang tongzhi* so straightforwardly remains an unsolved question.

> He Lin, Song Yun and He Ning took charge of the book's compilation successively (Cao Biaolin 2009: 76–80; Zhao Wu 2001: 230–42).

In every Chinese dynasty, central and local governments would order or organise officials to compile books. Officials of the highest rank are therefore normally cited as the responsible compilers. He Lin, Song Yun, and He Ning were undoubtedly the highest officials in Tibet, and they would therefore have been responsible for the compilation of the *Weizang tongzhi*.

5.2. An official compilation not intended for publication

This is the opinion held by Sun Fuhai (2008: 60–62). After sketching out the circulation and organisation of *Weizang tongzhi*, he concludes that it is a compilation of local chronicles for use only in the Amban yamen. Based on the fact that most of the materials in the *Weizang tongzhi* are archival documents, he considers that it could not have been published after compilation. Therefore, the compilation did not follow the general format of a monograph, and there was no author in the strict sense of the term.

The viewpoints of all the Chinese scholars cited above on the authorship of the *Weizang tongzhi*, no matter whether they favour He Lin,

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[38] Xiang Da's paper included in the book of Li Shengduo as appendix (Li Shengduo 1985: 422). The original contents are "他又欢喜校勘书籍，丹黄不去手，数十年如一日；一书一校再校至于三四校，牢守苏州派藏书家死校之法，不轻下断语".

Song Yun, He Ning or the idea of a collective compilation, share the general feature that they are statements that lack definitive proof. On the basis of the sources at hand, the organisation of the contents, phraseology, function, and so on, the compilation reflects an official activity, and when citing the work it might be preferable therefore to refer to the author as unknown (*zhuanren weixiang*).

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GLOSSARY

aocha 熬茶
Banchan eerdeni 班禅额尔德尼
baozang ju 宝藏局
Baqi yiwen bianmu 八旗艺文编目
benba ping 奔巴瓶
bianbing 弁兵
bingshen 丙申
bingzhi 兵制
bitieshi 笔帖士
Budala 布达拉
buluo 部落
Changbai 长白

Changbai Song Yun 长白松筠
Chengdu 成都
chengtu 程途
chengzhan 程站
chuansheng 川省
Congshu jicheng chubian 丛书集成初编
dai dangshi weicheng zhi guanshu ye殆当时未成之官书也
Da jiangjun 大将军
Dajianlu 打箭炉
Dalailama 达赖喇嘛
damu menggu 达木蒙古
Daoguang 道光
daoli 道里
Daxueshi 大学士
dazhao jigong bei 大招记功碑
diansheng 滇省
difangzhi 地方志
dililei 地理类
Ding Shicun 丁实存
duandaishi 断代史
Ebo 鄂博
eledete shi 额勒德特氏
En Hua 恩华
fangbing 番兵
fance 番册
fanguan 番官
fangyu 方舆
Fanjiang lanyao 藩疆揽要
fanmu 番目
fanseng 番僧
fanying 番营
fanzu 番族
fengduan 俸缎
fengsu 风俗
fengtu 风土
Fu Kang'an 福康安
fu 赋
fuxu 抚恤
gabulun 噶布伦

gagonglun 噶贡伦
Gongjue 公爵
guandimiao bei 关帝庙碑
Guangxu 光绪
guanji lupiao 官给路票
Guilin 桂林
Guo qinwang 果亲王
hao 号
hanwen 汉文
He Lin 和琳
He Ning 和宁
He Shen 和珅
He Ying 和瑛
houzang bei 后藏碑
hubierhan 呼必尔罕
Hubu 户部
hukou 户口
hutuketu hubierhan 瑚图克图呼必尔罕
Jianchang 建昌
Jiangxi 江西
jiangyu 疆域
jianxi cunshe 渐西村舍
Jiaowei 椒微
Jiaqing 嘉庆
[Jiaqing] Weizang tongzhi [嘉慶] 衛藏通志
jichou 己丑
jiehou 节候
jilüe 纪略
Jindai guoren zhuanshu zhi xizang shiji 近代国人撰述之西藏史籍
jingdian 经典
jinglüe 经略
jingzhong ci 旌忠祠
jinshi 进士
jinzhi tiandizang jiuxi gaoshi 禁止天地葬旧习告示
juan 卷
juanshou 卷首
juanshou xinbian 卷首新编
Junjichu 军机处
kanbu 堪布

Kangxi 康熙
kaozheng 考证
Kuifeng shanren 奎峰山人
kuofan 廓藩
lama 喇嘛
leihan 类函
Li Fengcai 李凤彩
Li Shengduo 李盛铎
Liangtai 粮台
liangyuan 粮员
Libu bitieshi 吏部笔帖士
Lifanyuan bitieshi 理藩院笔帖士
Lifanyuan 理藩院
Linjia jushi 麐嘉居士
liuyu 流寓
Long Jidong 龙继栋
lupiao 路票
luying 绿营
luying bianbing 绿营弁兵
malate shi 玛拉特氏
manwen 满文
maoyi 贸易
Mopan shan 磨盘山
Muzhai 木斋
niugulu shi 钮钴禄氏
pinji 品级
qianfa 钱法
Qianhouzang 前后藏
Qianlong 乾隆
qianlong yuzhi shiquanji bei 乾隆御制十全记碑
Qinchai yamen 钦差衙门
Qinchai 钦差
Qing gaozong shilu 清高宗实录
Qinghai menggu 青海蒙古
quanrenxu chudou bei 劝人恤出痘碑
Runping 润平
sanshijiu zu 三十九族
sengsu 僧俗
shanchuan 山川

Shanghai Guji Chubanshe 上海古籍出版社
Shangwu Yinshuguan 商务印书馆
shengdiao 升调
Shi'an jushi 师庵居士
shibu 史部
shijian 史鉴
shiwen 诗文
Shizi'an jiu zhuren 师子庵旧主人
Shuangqiu 爽秋
sifang waifan 四方外番
simiao 寺庙
siyuan 寺院
Songcen 松岑
Sun Shiyi 孙士毅
tai 台
Tai'an 太莽
Taichangsi qing 太常寺卿
Taiji 台吉
Taizi 太子
tang 塘
tangbei 唐碑
tanggute 唐古忒
Weizang tongzhi tiyao 卫藏通志提要
tiaoli 条例
Tiechuan 铁船
Tingyi 廷仪
Tonglu 桐庐
tongshi 通史
Tongzhi 同治
tusi 土司
waibu 外部
Wang Yunwu 王云五
Weizang tongzhi de zhuzhe shi He Ning 卫藏通志的著者是和宁
Weizang tongzhi zhuzhe kao 卫藏通志著者考
Weizang tongzhi 卫藏通志/衛藏通志
Weizang tushi 卫藏图识
wenwu yamen 文武衙门
wenyuan 文员
Wu Fengpei 吴丰培

wuchan 物产
wu juren 武举人
wula 乌拉
Wuling kuifeng shanren 吴陵奎峰山人
wushen 戊申
Xianfeng 咸丰
Xiangda 向达
xiang huangqi 镶黄旗
Xiangpu 湘浦 or 湘圃
xiangyin 饷银
Xichui jishi chugao 西陲纪事初稿
xingsheng 形胜
Xiujiang tiechuan jushi 修江铁船居士
xiu 修
Xizang Renmin Chubanshe 西藏人民出版社
Xizang yanjiu congkan 西藏研究丛刊
Xizang zhi 西藏志
Xizhai 希斋
Xuanzong 宣宗
Xuxiu siku quanshu 续修四库全书
yibian jiancha 以便检查
yiming zuanxiu 佚名纂修
yingguan quefen 营官缺分
yingwu 营伍
Yiqiao 巇樵
yiwen 艺文
yizhao zunshou 以昭遵守
yizhu 仪注
Yongxiu 永修
Yongzheng 雍正
Yuan Chang 袁昶
Yu'ning 昱宁
Yunli 允礼
yuzhi beiji 御制碑记
yuzhi shiwen 御制诗文
zang 藏
Zangjigai 藏纪概
zashu 杂书
zazhui 杂缀

Zhang Yuxin 张羽新
zhangcheng 章程
zhashi cheng 札什城
Zhashilunbu 扎什伦布
Zhejiang 浙江
zhenfu 镇抚
zheng lanqi 正蓝旗
zhizha 纸剳
zhizhang 职掌
Zhongli 重黎
zhuanren weixiang 撰人未详
zhuxiuren 主修人
zi 字
zibao 咨报
zongzuan 总纂
zuan 纂
zuanxiuren 纂修人
zuanxiu 纂修
zuanzhe 纂者

SDE SRID SANGS RGYAS RGYA MTSHO'S SHORT REMARKS ON ORDEALS IN HIS *GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS*

CHRISTOPH CÜPPERS

Before turning to the short section on ordeals in the *Guidelines for Government Officials (Blang dor gsal bar ston pa'i drang thig dwangs shel gyi me long nyer gcig pa)* written by sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, we should recollect what we already know about Tibetan ordeals. The first mentions of ordeals are to be found in the reports by missionaries and travellers to Tibet, such as Sarat Chandra Das and Ekai Kawaguchi, to name a just few.[1] The latest work on this subject is the brief article by O.R. Meisezahl (1987) in which Tibetan ordeals are introduced on the basis of the available Tibetan law codes. From this article we learn that the Tibetan judges used ordeals for separating truth from falsehood [*bden rdzun shes yong / bden rdzun 'byed dgos*] in accusations or defences as the last and final means, and there existed several methods for performances of ordeals. One method was, for example, to take out with one's hand the correct pebble of two, a black and a white one, from boiling oil or mud-water. If, after several days—for example three or seven—the hand showed no blisters or wounds, the accused was declared innocent, and conversely wounds or blisters were regarded as evidence of guilt. Another method was to lick a hot-red piece of iron. If the tongue was not burned, the accused was regarded as innocent. Still another method was that the accused person had to take a hot stone into his hands and walk seven steps with it. It was permissible to move the hot stone from one hand to the other while making the seven steps, and both hands were consequently investigated for wounds and blisters.[2]

The law codes also stress the fact that not everyone was liable to be summoned to undergo an ordeal. The exceptions were Buddhist priests (*bla ma*) and powerful practitioners (*sngags pa nus pa can*), monks

[1] For references see Schuh 1984: 291, fn. 2.

[2] See Dotson 2007 on oaths performed with dice.

(*btsun pa*), women, children below eight years (according to the Tibetan system of reckoning age), and mentally retarded people (*glen lkugs*). The reasons for these exceptions are that lamas and monks were above worldly matters; the tantric practitioners had magical powers to change the outcome of the ordeals; women favour only their husbands and children; and finally, children below eight years and imbeciles lack the mental capacity to distinguish between right and wrong.

In a law code from gTsang, kept in the National Archives in Kathmandu, the section on the restriction is a quotation from ancient law codes and reads as follows:

> [155] mna' mi'i 'os / khrims yig rnying pa rnams na / gser bya ngang pa snyi la ma 'dzin/
> dug sbrul nag [156] po thur du ma rgyug /
> pho rog nag po la rdo ma rgyag /
> khyi mo tshang ma la dbyug pa ma 'phyar /
> g.yu chung gru mar rtsad la ma rgyu zer ba 'dug pas /
> gser bya ngang pa'i [157] don ni / bla ma dang dge bshes yul gnyan pa dang btsun pa la mna'i yul min pas mna' mir mi bsdu /
> dug sbrul nag po sngags pa nus pa can gyi thabs rten 'brel gyi [158] sgo nas mna'i nyes pa sel nus pas mna' mir mi bsdu /
> pho rog nag po mi ltogs hral dang 'dod can gyis nyes pa dor nas mna' bza' bas mna' mir mi bsdu /
> khyi mo tshang ma ni skye dman rang gi khyo bo dang phrug gu'i ched du mna' za bas mna' mir mi bsdu /
> g.yu [159] chung gru dmar ni / byis pa dbye ba ma chags pa dang / glen lkugs rnams kyis mna'i nyes pa dang spang blang mi go bas mna' mir mi bsdu /
>
> [In former laws it has been said: do not trap a yellow goose, do not touch on the head of a serpent, do not throw a stone on a black crow, beat not a bitch while with young ones, string not a turquoise on a root.
>
> For the reason that a yellow goose is the high priest, and professor, who are great in the presence of God, and cannot be called upon to take oath. The serpent is the sorcerer and Ponpo, who are mighty and cannot be called to take oath. The bitch is a woman, and she will swear for the sake of her children and husband, and cannot give her oath. The turquoise is a child of immature understanding and unable to understand charity and sin and therefore cannot give oath.][3]

[3] I follow here the translation which was made by Tshering Phuntshog, Kalimpong, the 23rd July 1917, at the request of Charles Bell. A typescript copy of this translation is kept at the British Library.

The phrasing is slightly different in a version of the *Zhal lce bco lnga*, which is inserted in the *Tibetan Legal Material*, published in Dharamsala:

> mna' sgog pa'i dkar mi la spangs bya bzhi dor nas / dkar mi bsdu dgos pa yin [13v4] te / spangs bya bzhi ni /
> gser bya ngang pa 'dam la mi 'dzin zer ba de / btsun pa la mna' ma sgog zer ba yin / de'i rgyu mtshan btsun pa yul gnyan pa yin / mna' [13v5] btsun pa'i spangs bya yin pas lag 'ju la bsdu mi nyan /
> g.yu chung gru dmar ltar la mi rgyu zer ba de / bu tsha la mna' ma sgog zer ba yin / de'i rgyu mtshan ni / bu [13v6] tshas khe nyen ma togs pas / mna' za la nye bas lag la sdud mi nyan / bya rog nag po snyi la ma 'dzin zer ba de / bud med la mna' ma sgog zer ba yin / [13v7] de'i rgyu mtshan ni / bud med mdza' bo'i phyir du mna' za ba la nye ba'i lag 'ju la sdud mi nyan / dug sbrul nag po snyi la ma 'dzin zer ba de / sngag pa la [13v8] mna' ma sgog zer ba yin / de'i rgyu mtshan ni / sngag pas rdzas sngag dang mna' sel shes pas / mna' za ba la nye bas / 'di rnams lag 'ju la spangs [13v9] dgos so /

In his dictionary Dungkar (2002: 135) gives the following explanation for the term *dkar mi rgyus dkar gcig*:

> de sngon bod sa gnas kyi khrims khang du zhu gtugs byed skabs zhu gtugs byed mi ham shed can rnams mna' bskyal dgos pas / de'i skabs mna' skyel mi'i phyogs nas rgyus can gyi mi gcig yong dgos pa de la zer /

It is obvious that he took the lemma *dkar mi rgyus dkar can* from the *Zhal lce bco lnga*, and in his explanation indicates with the final *zer* that he is not very sure about the meaning of the word.

For the term *dkar mi* Goldstein (2001) gives: "1. a person who has taken an oath; 2. a close friend".

Owing to the fact that no reference is given in Goldstein's dictionary, I assume that his Tibetan informants provided the meanings 1 and 2, in a similar way to Dungkar but on a more-or-less hearsay basis.

Dotson (2006) gives as an explanation for *dkar mi* "jurors" (in its historical context, i.e. "a person taking an oath, especially one of allegiance").

I understand the phrase *lag 'ju la bsdu mi nyan* as "one cannot take him/her (as a *dkar mi*) by the hand and bring him/her along".

In my short sketch above of Meisezahl's article I have emphasised the facts that are necessary to understand the obscure remarks by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, i.e. the different methods of administering ordeals and the restriction that not everyone could be summoned to undergo one.

Sections 1.48 to 1.56 (my numbering) in the *Guidelines for Government Officials* (henceforth *Guidelines*) are a part of the first chapter, which refers—among other prescriptions—to procedures in court cases. The texts of these paragraphs are not easy to understand due to their brevity and to some rare and unknown vocabulary.

The text reads as follows:

> [1.48] khrims kyi gcod 'breg la zhal che bcad par phan yon kyang du ma yod pas zhu len mi snas zhu ba byung bar gzhigs pa'i phan tshun bden 'brel gyi 'dod pa rked gcog gi gzu re dang / de'i mthar don 'gangs la bltas pa'i rdo snum lcags mna' sho sogs 'dam kha byed /

rked gcog gi gzu = conciliation judgement, compromise judgement

[1.48] Translation

> Since there are with reference to judicial procedures also many advantages in punishments, the delegates who interrogate [the parties] should, under consideration of whatever statement was made, issue a compromise judgement to each [party] to the effect that each party has to relinquish some of its claims. At the end of this/As the last resort they should choose—under consideration of the importance of the matter—[an ordeal with] stone, oil, iron, oath, dice, etc.

> [1.49] ri tshig gzhung nas bkod dgos thor chags yong zhing gzhan ma zhu ba len dus nas so so'i ri tshig gang phul ga slog yong ba byed cing / mi 'os mi 'tsham pa 'dug na 'bud /

Searching the dictionaries for the term *ri tshig* we find the term only in one dictionary, the *rGya bod ming mdzod* (Kansu 1989):

ri tshig = *bden tshig* = truth, true words
ri tshig = *mna' tshig* = oath, covenant, vow

But it becomes clear from a passage in the *She bam chen mo* (Anonymous 1987), that the term *ri tshig* is a technical term with the meaning "oath formula" [or in German: "Eidesformel"].[4]

[1.49] Translation

> The oath formula should be formulated by the government and should be registered. At other times of interrogation, whatever is offered as an oath

[4] See "*kong po khams tshan gyi lcags ldag pa'i ri tshig gi snying po* [chief part of the oath formula of an ordeal with licking red-hot iron by a (member of) the Kong-po House]" (*She bam chen mo*: 118). Also "*nged tsha ba khams tshan gyis lcags ldags pa'i ri tshig gi snying po* [chief part of the oath formula of an ordeal with licking red-hot iron by me, a (member of) the Tsha-ba House" (*ibid.*).

formula should be free of contradictions, and unworthy and unsuitable [words] should be removed.

[1.50] 'ju can gyi rigs gzhung nas tshag rgyab byed pa dang so sos tshag 'dzugs skabs dang bstun pa'i khra ma gtong /

Although the technical term *'ju can* occurs in all law codes in their respective chapters, Meisezahl does not mention it. The term is still absent from all published dictionaries and is not well understood even by native speakers as can be seen from the erroneous emendation to *'jug can* in *sNga rabs bod kyi srid khrims* (2004: 268) a modern collection of legal material), edited by bSod nams tshe ring.

At present it is not clear whether *'ju can* is a loan word from Mongolian or Chinese or whether it is associated with lag la *'ju ba* (to take somebody by the hand). In any case, it means "someone who takes an oath" and probably "someone who takes an oath *per procurationem*".

Bearing in mind that there were persons ineligible or unfit to undergo an ordeal, I propose for the meaning of the term *tshag rgyab*—of which I have no exact reference except as in *bzo gnas* texts[5]—something like "to filter out", and consequently the term *tshag 'dzug* "to admit [as a person taking an oath] after investigation [whether the person falls into the excluded categories or not]".

tshag rgyab = *tshags rgyag* (?) = to filter
tshag 'dzugs = *tshags btsugs* = *bsko bzhag byed pa* = to appoint

I offer as a translation of this paragraph the following:

[1.50] Translation

Regarding the jurors, the government should select them, or when they are selected by the parties, one should accordingly mention this in the verdict.

Paragraphs 1.51, 1.52 and 1.53 are of no particular importance for the present argument, and I therefore omit their translation here.

[1.51] se'bras kham tshan rnams dogs pa ngan pas gzu 'di mthong phyogs che ba dang snum 'di nyen yod pas mtshon gzhung du gnang gtad med cing phan tshun du spyan rgyang ri tshig ga slog gi lcags kyi yin skyel dang lcags la brten pa'i slar nas 'di gyis dang ma thon par nyes chad kyi gzu re gtong /

[5] See Mi pham rgya mtsho, *bZo gnas gnas nyer mkho'i za ma tog*, fol. 10b: *tshag la btsag*, to filter, to sift.

yin skyel = proof [a rare word of which I have found only three occurrences]

nyes chad kyi gzu = judgement in which (both parties) are punished

> [1.52] spyir gzu 'dir gtong lugs rnam grangs mang zhing stabs bde ba zhig 'dug na'ang thog mar phan tshun la rgyun gtan bzos sgo dgos rigs yin kyang che nges la phul don dang de phyin la springs yig las bzos sgo mi byed /

[How people should be addressed on the envelope of the verdict.]

> [1.53] de nas phan tshun gyi don rtsa rnams sbyangs bshad du 'thus pa byed srol 'dug rung / phyis kyi mi rnams dogs pa ngan gshis zhu len mi snas zhu rtsa ji bzhin ma 'byor ba'i dogs par phan khyad / gnyis ka'i lo ma gang yin bzhag pa'i rdo kha rnams bkod rjes khrims sa stong par 'jog pa ma 'gab cing / zhu rtsa'i don 'gangs dang do bdag la gzhigs pa'i khrims 'degs babs smyug dang bcas pa bkod /
>
> [court fees]
>
> [1.54] don rtsa rnams phan tshun cha snyoms kyi spang blang dgos rigs 'di gyis dang / don 'gangs dang mtshungs pa'i bkru dgag re dgos par ri tshig lha dpang gi gsham du phan tshun so so'i don skor la gzhi lhas ga slog gi tshig la mang nyung ma shor ba dang /
>
> [the oath formula should not have too many or too few words]
>
> [1.55] ri [re] zer ba don rnam grangs ha cang gi mang ba ma byung phyin gsum la gang 'du bsdu dgos /

Why is the oath formula called *ri tshig*? The answer lies in the variant *re* above and we know from Dunhuang documents and orthographic variants in law codes that the oath or vow sentence ended in the emphatic particle *re*. Presumably in association with the mountain gods who are summoned as arbiters (*dpang du btsugs pa*) in the oath, the particle *re* turned into *ri*.[6]

I understand the phrase *ri zer ba don* as the points or sentences which end in the emphatic particle *re* or *ri*, i.e. the chief part (*ri tshig gi snying po*) of an oath. In order to prevent overly long oath formulas which may be confusing and which may provide a chance to insert conflicting and inappropriate wording, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho advises that the formula should as far as possible contain three main sentences ending in *ri*.

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[6] The usual translation of *dpang* is "witness", but I think that in some cases, or even in all, the meaning of "arbiter" is fitting and even more appropriate. The term *gzu bo* = "arbiter, judge" is paraphrased in Tibetan dictionaries with the term *dpang po*.

[7] On a short introduction to this text and its heterogeneous material, see Cüppers 2010.

We are in a fortunate position to have a few occurrences of *ri tshig* at our disposal. They were inserted in the text *She bam chen mo* (Anonymous 1987), a collection of legal and other material.[7] The *ri tshig* in question read as follows:

> [page 117] shing yos [1675 BC] zla tshes nyin / yi dam rdo rje 'jigs byed dpal ye shes kyi mgon po phyag drug pa / khyad par dam can chos kyi rgyal po sprul pa'i chos rgyal chen po sku lnga 'khor bcas rang la 'go ba'i lha bsrung gnyan po rnams [page 118] dang bcas pa'i drung du / 'bob sogs spor bdun tsam zhugs te nged kong po khams tshan gyis lcags ldag pa'i ri tshig gi snying po / grub rgya ba'i dpon g.yog skya ser tshang ma nged kong po khams tshan la thob par grub rgya sde pa'i phyag tham kyang nges khungs min ri / phyag tham nges khungs yin rjes bar skabs su tsha ba khams tshan gyis gra rgyun dang 'grul pa 'ga ' zhig brkus pa lta bu'i ham bzos byas pa las khyed tshab khams tshan la thob pa'i babs 'brel yod ri / da sgos se ra stod bla zur bkra shis rgya mtsho sog yul nas 'khor ba 'dir ma zad / grub rgya ba'i dpon g.yog skya ser tshang ma nged kong po khams tshan gyis thob pa'i don la lcags ldags pa 'di bden pa bden tshig gi sgo nas ldags pa ma gtogs / rdzas man ngag gi sgo nas ldags pa ri krus pa yin pas / go don las 'gal ba shar na lcags mi thon zhing lce 'tshig pa dang khra 'dzags pa'i yid ches mngon sum du ston par mdzod ma 'gal tshe lcags thon zhing lce rgya dar las 'jam po thong zhus / nga kong po /

> [page 118] nged tsha ba khams tshan gyis lcags ldags pa'i ri tshig gi snying po /
> dbyings pa bsod nams chos 'phel gyi skabs nas da lta'i bar / nged tsha ba khams tshan la grub rgya ba dpon g.yog gi 'grul pa dang gra rgyun yong bzhin pa min ri / da lam se ra stod bla zur bkra shis rgya mtsho sog yul nas 'khor bar kong po khams tshan gyi ham pa byas rtsod min ri / bla ma bkra shis rgya mtsho ma zad / grub rgya ba skya ser dpon g.yog tshang ma nged tsha ba khams tshan la thob pa'i don du lcags ldag 'di bden pa bden tshig gi tshig brjod gong bzhin yin /

The end of this oath formula is abbreviated (*bden tshig gi tshig brjod gong bzhin yin*) and leads to the assumption that the closing part of an oath formula for the iron-licking ordeal had a fixed phrasing:

> lcags ldags pa 'di bden pa bden tshig gi sgo nas ldags pa ma gtogs / rdzas man ngag gi sgo nas ldags pa ri krus pa yin pas / go don las 'gal ba shar na lcags mi thon zhing lce 'tshig pa dang khra 'dzags pa'i yid ches mngon sum du ston par mdzod ma 'gal tshe lcags thon zhing lce rgya dar las 'jam po mthong zhus /

Translation:

> I am not only licking (the red-hot iron) by (uttering) words of truth, that

> this ordeal of red-hot iron licking (shows the) truth, but because the licking by means of a powerful formula is a clarification by an oath formula (*ri krus*), if it appears that there are contradictions to the meaning, the iron will not come off, the tongue will be burned and blood will drop from it, revealing [the lie] convincingly and manifestly; if there are no contradictions, the iron does not stick/comes off and the tongue appears to be softer than Chinese silk.

There are some more details given here which are of interest for the understanding of an iron-licking ordeal:

> [page 117] 'bras spungs tsha ba khams tshan gnyis nas sngags khang du lcags ldags pa'i dgos char / so so nas yi dam la snyan dar dang mchod chas blos bcad dkon gnyer la gser la gser zho re / mgar ba la gos kha re / tshogs chas rtsam mkhar ru'i khal re / lug khog phyed re / ja mkhar nyag re sdor bcas / mi snar rkang gla smar khrag phyed ma'i srang re bcas sprod / shing yos zla tshe la /

This ordeal took place in a *sngags khang*, presumably in Drepung monastery. The two persons undergoing the ordeal had to provide the following items each: a ceremonial scarf to the deity and a gold *zho* to the *dkon gnyer* who provided the ritual utensils; to the smith each one had to give a square piece of cloth; for the assembled group each one had to give a standard *khal* of tsampa, a half-sheep (*lug khog*) and a standard *nyag* of tea including the butter (*rdor bcas*);[8] and to the delegate officials each had to give a *smar khrag phyed ma'i srang* as their travel allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that one cannot understand the relevant paragraphs of the *Guidelines* without referring to the law codes. Only by understanding the procedures of a Tibetan ordeal and the different methods the Tibetans used for such procedures can we make any sense of these paragraphs. On the other hand, our understanding of the law codes is also slightly enhanced by the admittedly short section in the *Guidelines*. From these we learn that the oath formula should be concise and to the point, without contradictions and unnecessary words. The main sen-

8 *rdor/sdor* is the condiment in soups or Tibetan tea. In the present case the condiment is butter.

tences of the oath formula should, if possible, be no more than three in number.

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A NEARLY-FORGOTTEN DGE LUGS PA INCARNATION LINE AS MANORIAL LORD IN BKRA SHIS LJONGS, CENTRAL TIBET

PETER SCHWIEGER

INTRODUCTION

The households (*bla brang*) of certain *sprul sku* in Tibet were able to accumulate great amounts of wealth and land during the course of their history. As in the case of feudal societies in mediaeval Europe, land ownership included the right to demand duties and regular corvée from the farmers and nomads who cultivated the land and were bound to it. The estates belonging to a *sprul sku*'s household were often scattered over areas that were far apart. Despite the vastness of the territory that was theoretically available for the distribution of land, cultivable land was limited. The constant demand for land could therefore only be satisfied by the circulation of land ownership. Melvyn Goldstein has analysed that during the last two hundred years of the dGa' ldan pho brang Government, the estates that were confiscated for re-distribution (Goldstein 1973: 7–11) were mainly those of the aristocracy. He states that the confiscation of religious estates was a rare and mostly only temporary exception, limited to monasteries and households "whose leaders had committed serious political offenses" (*ibid.*: 7). As a result, more and more land was transferred from the aristocracy to the government and especially to the clergy.

There is no evidence to contradict Goldstein's analysis in principle. However, if on the one hand we extend our focus back to the seventeenth century and, on the other, take a closer look at the clergy's acquisition of land, the confiscation of religious estates was neither very exceptional nor always just temporary. The establishment of the rule of the dGa' ldan pho brang Government towards the middle of the seventeenth century was accompanied by a forced conversion of monasteries of other Buddhist schools into those of the dGe lugs pa. It was mostly bKa' brgyud monasteries in Central and East Tibet that were affected. The forced conversion also meant massive confiscation of estates as

economic resources to strengthen the dGge lugs pa and to weaken rival Buddhist schools. This process continued until the end of the eighteenth century when, after the first Gorkha War, the Qianlong Emperor (reign: 1736–1795) ordered the extinction of the Zhwa dmar pa incarnation line and the confiscation of his residence, the Yangs pa can Monastery, together with its estates. The beneficiary was the newly established Kun bde gling *bla brang* of the Eighth rTa tshag *rje drung rin po che* Ye shes blo bzang bstan pa'i mgon po (1760–1810), who at that time functioned as regent under the Eighth Dalai Lama 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho (1758–1804). But after the death of the Eighth rTa tshag *rje drung rin po che*, Yangs pa can and its estates were again confiscated on the orders of the Ambans and lost to the then regent, the Seventh De mo *qutuqtu nomun qan* Blo bzang thub bstan 'jigs med rgya mtsho (in office 1811–1819).[1]

In the present paper I want to draw attention to another almost forgotten, but once nevertheless important dGe lugs pa incarnation line in Central Tibet. The sources available so far do not allow us to reconstruct anything like a complete history of this incarnation line and its fate as manorial lords. By contrast, they pose more questions than they present clear answers. Nevertheless, they demonstrate in some detail continuity and change surrounding clerical landownership in Tibet over time, including periods of unrest and turmoil.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE INCARNATION LINE'S SEAT, BKRA SHIS LJONGS MONASTERY, IN THE 17th CENTURY, AND ITS SKYID SHOD PATRONS

The residence of the incarnation line was a monastery called bKra shis ljongs, located roughly 35 kilometres to the northeast of Lhasa, not far from dGa' ldan Monastery in present-day sTag rtse County. In the diplomatic sources known to me the incarnation line itself is usually named after the monastery as the bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku*. Otherwise it is mentioned as sKyid shod *zhabs drung rin po che*.

The bKra shis ljongs Monastery is listed in bShes gnyen tshul khrims' book on monasteries in and around Lhasa (bShes gnyen tshul khrims 2001: 125). It still existed until the middle of the twentieth century. At that time the monastery was home to only about thirty monks.

[1] For details, cf. Schwieger forthcoming.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, that is to say at the time of sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705), the monastery housed 154 monks (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989: 155). As the year of its foundation bShes gnyen tshul khrims gives the year 1600. As founder he mentions the Fourth Panchen Lama Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1567/70–1662),[2] but adds that it was also said to have been founded by rTse thang Byang ma dPal 'byor lhun grub (2001). An early historical source that provides supplementary information on bKra shis ljongs Monastery is Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's *Vaiḍūrya ser po*, composed in 1698 (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989: 155). According to this work, the monastery was founded jointly by the governor of sKyid shod, the Fourth Panchen Lama and rTses dang Byang ma ba dPal 'byor bsod nams lhun grub.[3] Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho listed the latter also as rTses dang chen po Byang ma Khang gsar ba dPal 'byor bsod nams lhun grub among the lamas of Se ra byes (*ibid.*: 142).[4] Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's statement reflects more precisely the historical circumstances of the foundation, because it does not ignore the significance of the patron who granted the land and funded the new monastery. He was one of the major political figures of his time and crucial as patron of the dGe lugs pa in dBus province: sKyid shod dGa' ldan pa'i sde pa gYul rgyal nor bu (died 1607). He was among those who welcomed the Fourth Dalai Lama Yon tan rgya mtsho (1589–1617) on his arrival from Mongolia in 1603 (Saṅs-rGyas rGya-mTsho 1999: 222).[5] Sørensen and Hazod (2007: vol. II, 768; vol. I, 242f) doubt that he was the son of sKyid shod *zhabs drung* bKra shis rab brtan (1531–1589) and see it more likely that he was his nephew. However, in a document found in the Kun bde gling archives (ID 1681) we read that

2 The author gives the abbreviated name Blo bzang chos rgyan and gives as year of his birth 1570. The year 1567 results from the Panchen Lama's autobiography (Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan 1969). Since he is the first bearer of the title Panchen Lama, he is sometimes called the First and sometimes the Fourth Panchen Lama.

3 Note that for rTse thang, the place of the lama's origin, the sources have various spellings: rTse thang (bShes gnyen tshul khrims 2001), rTses dang (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989), rTsed thang (Champa Thupten Zongtse 1995: 240). Dung dkar (2002: 254) refers to this individual as rTses thang Byang ma Khang gsar ba bSod nams lhun grub, but mentions only that he was invited after the foundation of the monastery. This is in accordance with Khetsun Sangpo (1975: 59), which is based on the same source. Khetsun Sangpo does not mention the epithet rTses thang Byang ma Khang gsar ba.

4 The sobriquet Byang ma Khang gsar ba is also used by Dung dkar (2002: 254).

5 Some scattered vignettes about him obtained from historiographical sources are summarised by Sørensen and Hazod (2007: vol. I, 245).

gYul rgyal nor bu founded bKra shis ljongs Monastery in commemoration of his deceased father Zhabs drung A khu bkra shis who is identical with bKra shis rab brtan (Dung dkar 2002: 256). The slightly damaged document was issued to confirm the rights and privileges of bKra shis ljongs as one of the long-established dGe lugs monasteries. The document does not mention the issuer, but shows at the bottom the seal of Pho lha nas (1689–1747) with the inscription: *pho lha tha'i ji bsod nams stobs rgyas kyi tham ka / don kun grub pa* (Schuh 1981: 68). Thus it is one of several documents issued by Pho lha nas in favor of bKra shis ljongs. The document refers to the confirmation of bKra shis ljongs' rights by the seals of the successive previous rulers, starting with gYul rgyal nor bu and ending with Sa skyong D'a'i ching sba dur who is identical with Khang chen nas (died 1727). The latter's seal was used from 1721 to 1727 when Tibet was governed by a council of ministers (Schuh 1981: 61). What is highly problematic is the date of issue: the 8th day of the 7th month of the fire monkey year. This would either correspond to a date in 1716, which is too early, or in 1776 which is too late. As is well known, Pho lha nas used his seal during his rule from 1728 to 1747 (Schuh 1981: 68). Thus, either the year given on the document is a simple scribal mistake or else the document itself is a forgery.

BSTAN 'DZIN BLO BZANG RGYA MTSHO, FIRST OF THE SKYID SHOD SPRUL SKU LINE

Regarding the incarnation line established in bKra shis ljongs Monastery we have a few fragmentary and partly conflicting items of information. The line started with a famous dGe lugs pa scholar: bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho, who lived from 1593 to 1638.[6] His biography was written by Rong po sKal ldan rgya mtsho (1607–1677).[7] Khetsun Sangpo (1975: 58–65) provides a slightly abridged version. Another Tibetan summary that draws in the same source is contained in Dung dkar (2002: 254f). Furthermore, based on the same source

[6] Note that 1636 as the year of his death provided by Khetsun Sangpo (1975: 65) is based on a faulty calculation.

[7] *sKyid shod zhabs drung bstan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho'i rnam thar mdor bsdus*. In *Po ta lar bzhugs pa'i dge lugs gsung 'bum gyi dkar chag* (TBRC W19836: 227). lHa sa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang 1990. http://tbrc.org/link?RID=O1GC1356|O1GC1356|GC1357|GC1361|GC1452|GC1457|GC1463|GC1469|GC1472|GC1475|GC1502|GC1622$W19836.

Anne Chayet (2002: 79f) outlines the main events in the life of bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho. He was born in Lhasa as the fourth son of gYul rgyal nor bu, the governor of sKyid shod. The biography refers to him as a reincarnation (*yang srid*) of Zhang zhung Chos dbang grags pa (1404–1469) (Ko zhul Grags pa 'byung gnas *et al.* 1992: 1464f; bSod nams rgya mtsho *et al.* 2000: 460), a nephew of mKhas grub rje, and of sGom sde shar pa Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1532–1592). However, this ascription is hardly to be regarded as the result of a previous systematic effort to find the reincarnation of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan. According to the biography, bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho's father founded a new monastery called bKra shis 'byung gnas specifically for his son's studies, and this establishment is most probably identical with bKra shis ljongs. There, bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho studied under rTse thang Byang ma dPal 'byor lhun grub, mentioned in the biography as dPal 'byor bsod nams lhun grub.[8] Although we have two different motivations for the foundation of bKra shis ljongs Monastery—commemoration of the founder's deceased father and provision of facilities for the study of the founder's son—, it is evident that it was the political ruler who took the initiative to build a new dGe lugs pa monastery, which he then attached to his family. That bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho and bKra shis ljongs Monastery had their own estates is also evident from the biography: the *bla ma*'s own estate was Brag dkar, which is also known as the residential estate of the sKyid shod pa (Sørensen 2007: 864).

bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho's life coincided with a period of utmost unrest in Central Tibet. Both the dGe lugs pa and the house of the sKyid shod pa were under permanent pressure from the rulers of neighbouring gTsang province, patrons of the rival bKa' brgyud schools. According to bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho's biography, after the death of his father gYul rgyal nor bu in 1607,[9] troops of the patrons of the bKa' brgyud pa had invaded dBus province and plun-

[8] rTse thang Byang ma dPal 'byor lhun grub, also known as dPal 'byor bsod nams lhun grub, is not to be confused with 'Khon ston dPal 'byor lhun grub (1561–1637). According to Khetsun Sangpo (1973: 443f), in Sera Monastery the former had once acted as tutor of the latter, who went on to become abbot of the upper college (Byes) of Se ra Monastery (*ibid.*: 445).

[9] Khetsun Sangpo (1975: 60) gives the earth sheep year of the 10th sixty-year cycle, which would correspond to 1619. This, however, does not fit into the chronology narrated by him. Thus *sa lug* seems to be a mistake for *me lug*. Elsewhere 1607 is given as year of his death (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: vol. I, 245).

dered numerous district estates, destroyed some smaller dGe lugs monasteries and imprisoned bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho's elder brothers (Dung dkar 2002: 2329; Sørensen 2007: 867). In 1618 gTsang military forces occupied dBus province. Mongols of the Tümed tribe took sides with the dGe lugs pa, and the combined forces of the Tümed and of the sKyid shod governor bSod nams rgyal mtshan, alias bSod nams rnam rgyal (1586–1636), together with the monks from Se ra and 'Bras spungs attacked the gTsang troops (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: vol. I, 245; Sørensen 2007: 868f). Though they fought successfully at first, it was finally the gTsang army which prevailed and put the combined forces to rout. The monasteries of Se ra and 'Bras spungs were occupied by soldiers from gTsang, and the district estates of the sKyid shod pa were confiscated. bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho had no choice but to escape towards the north. He travelled as far as the land of the Mongols (*sog yul*).

However, after the mediation of the Fourth Panchen Lama between the gTsang troops on the one side and the allied forces the dGe lugs pa, sKyid shod pa, and Tümed Mongols on the other in 1621, the position of the dGe lugs pa and the sKyid shod pa in dBus had improved. Though hostile towards the dGe lugs pa as holders of large estates and as an ambitious political power in Central Tibet, in 1622 the gTsang *sde srid* nevertheless allowed the new Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) to be installed in 'Bras spungs Monastery (Tucci 1949: 58f).

The oldest legal document concerning bKra shis ljongs Monastery known to me is a testament (*kha chems kyi yig dan*) drawn up in 1625 (ID 1045). Motivated by a serious illness, a man called Dar gling pa Dar rgyas bequeathed an estate to the *dpon slob paṇ chen rin po che* and his monastic college (*grwa tshang*) in exchange for religious services for the benefit of himself and those he might leave behind. At that time the title *paṇ chen rin po che* was not yet the official title of the incarnation line of the great hierarchs of bKra shis lhun po Monastery. Thus it cannot be excluded that the title is being used here as a mere courtesy for another respected learned incarnation. However, since the monastic college mentioned in the document refers to bKra shis ljongs, it is not unlikely that *paṇ chen rin po che* does indicate the Fourth Panchen Lama Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan. After all, he was among the founders of that monastery and probably took care of it in the beginning. The document further mentions the Byang ma ba and the *zhabs drung chos rje*.

The text is remarkable also in other resepects: it is a fine example of a will issued in favour of a monastery, thus illustrating an important resource for the monastic economy. Since this type of document is rare in the archivial material at hand, it is worth translating in full:[10]

> Content of the written agreement about [his] last will, delivered by Dar gling pa Dar rgyas in the second month of the wood ox (year 1625):
>
> I have no hope that I will overcome [my disease] in the long run, because this time this illness is a severe and serious one. Thus [my last will is fixed as follows]:
>
> Previously, when the lord of bKra shis ljongs [had invited] the Byang ma ba [dPal 'byor lhun grub], and when the *zhabs drung chos rje* [bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho] had granted the sustenance [for him], the storehouse-keeper of bDe chen rdzong[11] had handed over bKra shis ljongs to my *chos rje rin po che* [bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho] as his personal monastic estate. That is it.
>
> Now, by offering [it] with trust and with an open heart to the *slob dpon paṇ chen rin po che* and [his] monastic community as an endowment for religious ceremonies in the event that I do not die for the time being and, in the event that I do die, for dedicating [the merit] to draw [my consciousness] upwards [to a better rebirth] and as a flower with a stalk for the continuous [practice of] virtues, I have handed over from the core of my heart—after [I] had given an appropriate share to the Ya lde chos mdzad ma—the other [property, namely the estate] Rin sdings,[12] and the people I will leave behind, [namely] my wife, the mother and the children, the monks, and the few serving women, together with the decrees of the gTsang *sde srid rin po che*, the ruler and his ministers, and the earlier and later [granted] land tenure documents to the *dpon slob rin po che* [and his] monastic community.
>
> Without moving them away, the *dpon slob* must later give the people I will leave behind, [namely] my wife, the mother and the children, together with the serving women, [the feeling of] not missing the deceased one.
>
> In the past the lord did not deviate from the care and help [granted already] at the time of Byang ma nas [dPal 'byor lhun grup]. Please [go on] accordingly!

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[10] Of help for the translation was not only the context provided by other documents and historigraphical sources, but also the discussions with my colleague Namgyal Nyima to whom I am thus very grateful. For the transliteration and an image of the document see the appendix.

[11] *bde gnyer* is an abbreviation for *bde chen gnyer tshang*. As such it appears for instance in ID 1040.

[12] Elsewhere the name of the estate is given as Rin sding or Rin chen sding (ID 1236; ID 1040). In the database of the *Digitized Tibetan Archives Material at Bonn University* (http://www.dtab.uni-bonn.de) ID 1040 is dated 1498. Based on the content of the document this has to be corrected to 1618.

> After I have died, you monk community, headed by *slob dpon paṇ chen rin po che*, must always and in every situation do whatever is good to seal the dedication [of merit] which benefit [me] after my death.
> For that purpose I have given [here the imprint of] my, Dar rgyas' seal.

In 1632 Choγtu Tayiǰi of the northern Qalqa defeated the Tümed. Thereupon bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho, who at that time was staying in the Kokonor region, again had to escape from the war and turned to Khams. Finally, in 1637 Gushri qan (1582–1655) of the Oirats arrived with his army at Kokonor and defeated Choγtu Tayiǰi. As is well known, from then on things gradually began to improve for the dGe lugs pa.

THE INCARNATION LINE IN THE SOURCES

After the death of bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho in 1638, there was obviously an interest in making him the starting point of a new incarnation line in bKra shis ljongs Monastery. Dung dkar (2002: 255) writes that bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho's successor was sKyid shod *zhabs drung* Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin phrin las, and that although there were a few subsequent incarnations he, i.e. Dung dkar, has hitherto been unable to find any detailed accounts (see also Smith 2001: 129). For sKyid shod *zhabs drung* Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin phrin las, both Gene Smith and bSod nams rgya mtsho *et al.* (2000: 34) provide the dates 1639–1682 which would of course fit. However, Ko shul Grags pa 'byung gnas *et al.* (1992: 125) give no date of birth, but state that it is evident that he died 1696.[13]

I have so far found three different historical sources for the succession line of the bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku*. None of them, however, mentions sKyid shod *zhabs drung*, that is, *sprul sku* Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin phrin las as the reincarnation or successor of bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho.

In his *Vaiḍūrya ser po* Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho merely lists the names of the succession of lamas without explicitly referring to them as *sprul sku*. Leaving a minor rearrangement of syllables aside, this list matches one that features on an undated slip of paper found in the Kun

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[13] This sKyid shod *zhabs drung* is mentioned in the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography as sKyid shod *sprul sku* Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin phrin las for the year 1655 (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1989: vol. I, 476).

bde gling archives (ID 2157). This brief note does not go beyond the succession list of the *Vaiḍūrya ser po*. After mentioning rTses thang *zhal mnga'*, that is rTses dang Byang ma ba dPal 'byor bsod nams lhun grub, four successive lamas are listed. Just as in the *Vaiḍūrya ser po*, the fourth is noted as being contemporary with the author. However, in this case he is explicitly described as the "precious rebirth" (*sku skye rin po che*): that is, he had the status of a *sprul sku*.

The third source is the famous registration list of Tibetan incarnations demanded by the Qing government, composed in 1814 and expanded to include additional information over the next few years.[14] As proved by several spot tests this list is not completely reliable and has to be regarded with caution, especially as a basis for any statistical examination. Here the successive lamas are called bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku* and are listed as a succession of rebirths. The following chart shows the variations and differences between the three sources.

Leaving aside the fact that the sequence of the syllables in some of the names is confused, it is only the name dGe 'dun rgyal mtshan provided by the third and latest list that does not fit into the picture. Therefore, that name should probably be omitted. The *sKye phreng deb gzhung* also provides the age of death for each of the reincarnations. As I have checked already with regard to other incarnation lines, these numbers are not at all reliable, especially in regard to earlier individuals. In this specific case the sum of all ages listed would shift the birth

	Vaiḍūrya ser po	**ID 2157**	***sKye phreng deb gzhung***
1	*Chos rje* bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho	*Zhabs drung chos rje* bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho	Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho
2	Blo bzang bstan skyong rgya mtsho	*Zhabs drung chos rje* bsTan skyong blo bzang rgya mtsho	dGe 'dun rgyal mtshan *chos rje* Blo bzang bstan skyong rgya mtsho
3	Blo bzang bstan 'dzin	*Zhabs drung chos rje* Blo bzang bstan 'dzin	*Zhabs drung* Blo bzang bstan 'dzin

[14] *Bod dang/ bar khams/ rgya sog bcas kyi bla sprul rnams kyi skye phreng deb gzhung*, abbreviated as *sKye phreng deb gzhung* (Chab spel *et al.* 1991: 281–369). For the year of composition see also the introduction of Ma grong Mi 'gyur rdo rje (*ibid.*: 24).

4	Ngag dbang phun tshogs rnam rgyal	*sKu skye rin po che* Ngag dbang phun tshogs rnam rgyal	Byung {read: Ngag} dbang phun tshogs rnam rgyal
5			Blo bzang phrin las rgyal mtshan
6			sKal bzang dam chos rgyal mtshan
7			Blo bzang thub bstan rgyal mtshan (born as bSod nams bkra shis)

of the first incarnation to the beginning of the sixteenth century.[15] And even if we simply delete dGe 'dun rgyal mtshan without replacement, the first incarnation's birth would still be about half a century too early.

Blo bzang bstan skyong rgya mtsho, number two according to the *Vaiḍūrya ser po*, is known from a longevity prayer composed for him by the Fifth Dalai Lama.[16] There he is mentioned as sKyid shod *sde pa chos rje* Blo bzang bstan skyong rgya mtsho. Starting with the year 1652 and ending in 1659, the autobiography of the Fourth Panchen Lama Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan 1969) refers to him on several occasions without giving his personal name. He is either just called the rebirth, *sku skye*, of the sKyid shos *sde pa chos rje* (142v), that is, sKyid shod *zhabs drung chos rje* (147r), or addressed as sKyid shod *sku skye rin po che* (150r, 153r), that is, sKyid shod *sprul pa'i sku* (160v), and for the year 1659 explicitly as the reincarnation (*sprul sku*) of the *sde pa* Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho from sKyid shod (181r). That Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho is here—as in the chart presented above—just a variant of the name bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho and actually refers to the same person, is evident from the Panchen Lama's autobiography. For the year 1615 the first *zhabs drung chos rje* is mentioned as sKyid shod *sde pa* bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho (57r). The terms *sku skye*, *sku skye rin po che* and *sprul sku*, that feature in the Panchen Lama's autobiog-

15 The fact that the age given in Tibetan sources corresponds to ordinal numbers according to Western reckoning has been taken into account.

16 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho. *sKyid shod sde pa chos rje blo bzang bstan skyong rgya mtsho la gsol 'debs brtan bzhugs*. In *gSung 'bum/_ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho/* (TBRC W1PD107937/18: 300–301). Pe cin: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009.

http://tbrc.org/link?RID=O8LS6083|O8LS60838LS7006$W1PD107937.

raphy to designate the second *zhabs drung chos rje*, make it very clear that in the middle of the seventeenth century the high dGe lugs pa authorities had recognised the sKyid shod pas' installation of their own incarnation line in their monastery bKra shis ljongs.

THE QAN'S PROTECTION AND THE GRANT OF THE sNANG RTSE ESTATE TO THE LINE

Though there are a few references to the bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku* in the digitised archives material from Kun bde gling, there is only one document that also gives a *sprul sku*'s name (ID 1235). This document, issued by Lha bzang qan (died 1717) in 1709, mentions Ngag dbang phun tshogs rgya mtsho as the recently deceased *sprul sku*. This is the Fourth bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku*.

According to a document, issued by Lha bzang qan in 1705 to confirm ownership rights of bKra shis ljongs (ID 1918), the predecessor of the contemporary *zhabs drung* of bKra shis ljongs had become the chief spiritual teacher (*dbu bla*) of bsTan 'dzin chos rgyal, i.e. Gushri qan, and the latter had therefore given the sNang rtse estate, located in sTod lung (ID 1089, 1172, 1185), to the lama. The *zhabs drung* living at the time of Gushri qan should be identical with *zhabs drung chos rje* bsTan 'dzin blo bzang rgya mtsho who, towards the end of his life, had been on good terms with Gushri qan (Chayet 2002: 80). The second *zhabs drung chos rje* Blo bzang bstan skyong rgya mtsho can be ruled out as *dbu bla* of Gushri qan, because at the time of Gushri qan's death he must still have been a boy of about sixteen years. It is hard to believe that Gushri qan took him as his chief spiritual teacher.

A similar document, issued by Lha bzang qan in 1707 (ID 2051), again mentions bsTan 'dzin chos rgyal (that is, Gushri qan) as benefactor of the so called bKra shis ljongs *qutuqtu* (*kho thog thu*), whose rights were confirmed by the seals of the subsequent rulers. Special mention is made of the fact that Gushri qan gave horses, cattle, and sheep to the *sprul sku* to spare them from slaughter.

This matter was already addressed in a document issued in 1678 (ID 1167). The document has no *intitulatio*. Someone has written on the fabric on which the document's paper is mounted: *da' yan rgyal po'i bka' shog* or "decree of Dayan qan", that is Dayan Ochir qan who in 1658 fol-

lowed his father Gushri qan as king. Since Dayan Ochir qan had already died in 1668 (Weiers 2004:190) he can be ruled out. However, at the bottom the document bears the red imprint of one of the seals of the Dalai Lama (Schuh 1981: 11–13). Although this seal was used not just by the Fifth Dalai Lama, but also by later Dalai Lamas, we can conclude that in this case it was the Fifth Dalai Lama who issued the document.[17] The document confirms that it is forbidden to appropriate, as provisions, the sheep that have been set free by Gushri qan. Though the *publicatio* of the decree is missing, it is evident that it is addressed to officials passing through the pastures of bKra shis ljongs.

That Gushri qan had already benefited bKra shis ljongs Monastery is confirmed by a very short document issued on 26th March 1649. The document is sealed by Gushri qan (Chab spel *et al.* 1991: 70) as well as by the first regent bSod nams chos 'phel (1595–1658) (*ibid.*: 42):

> *Ja khral / ma {mar} khral gyi bsdud pa po go bod {'go 'bod} sne slebs la springs pa / (bkra shis) ljong {ljongs} gi ja len mi gnyis khal ma bcu gcig la / ja khral / la {mar} khral gyi brtser {gtser} pa naṃ yang ma byed / sa glang hor zla gnyis pa'i tshes bcu gsuṃ la chos 'khor lha sa nas bris /*
>
> Sent to the collectors of tea- and butter-tax, to those who are called headmen, the leaders. Regarding the two persons who fetch the tea for bKra shis ljongs never bother their eleven pack animals with tea- and butter-tax! Written in the earth-ox [year] on the thirteenth day of the second Hor month in Chos 'khor Lhasa. (ID 1110)

To the best of my knowledge there is no source that highlights Blo bzang bstan skyong rgya mtsho's reincarnation Blo bzang bstan 'dzin in any way. The autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama mentions him once as bKra shis ljongs *chos rje* Blo bzang bstan 'dzin, who visited the Dalai Lama in 1668 (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1989: vol. II, 114).[18]

The bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku*, the bKra shis ljongs pa, had to pay government taxes (*gzhung khral*) for their estates. But the regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho issued decrees to prohibit the imposition of any fur-

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[17] The Tibet Archive in Lhasa has dated the document to 1798. Leaving aside the content of the document, this date can definitely be ruled out, because in 1798 decrees were authenticated by the seal of the first rTa tshag regent.

[18] The Dalai Lama's autobiography mentions the bKra shis ljongs chos rje a few times, but normally without specifying the name of the incumbent.

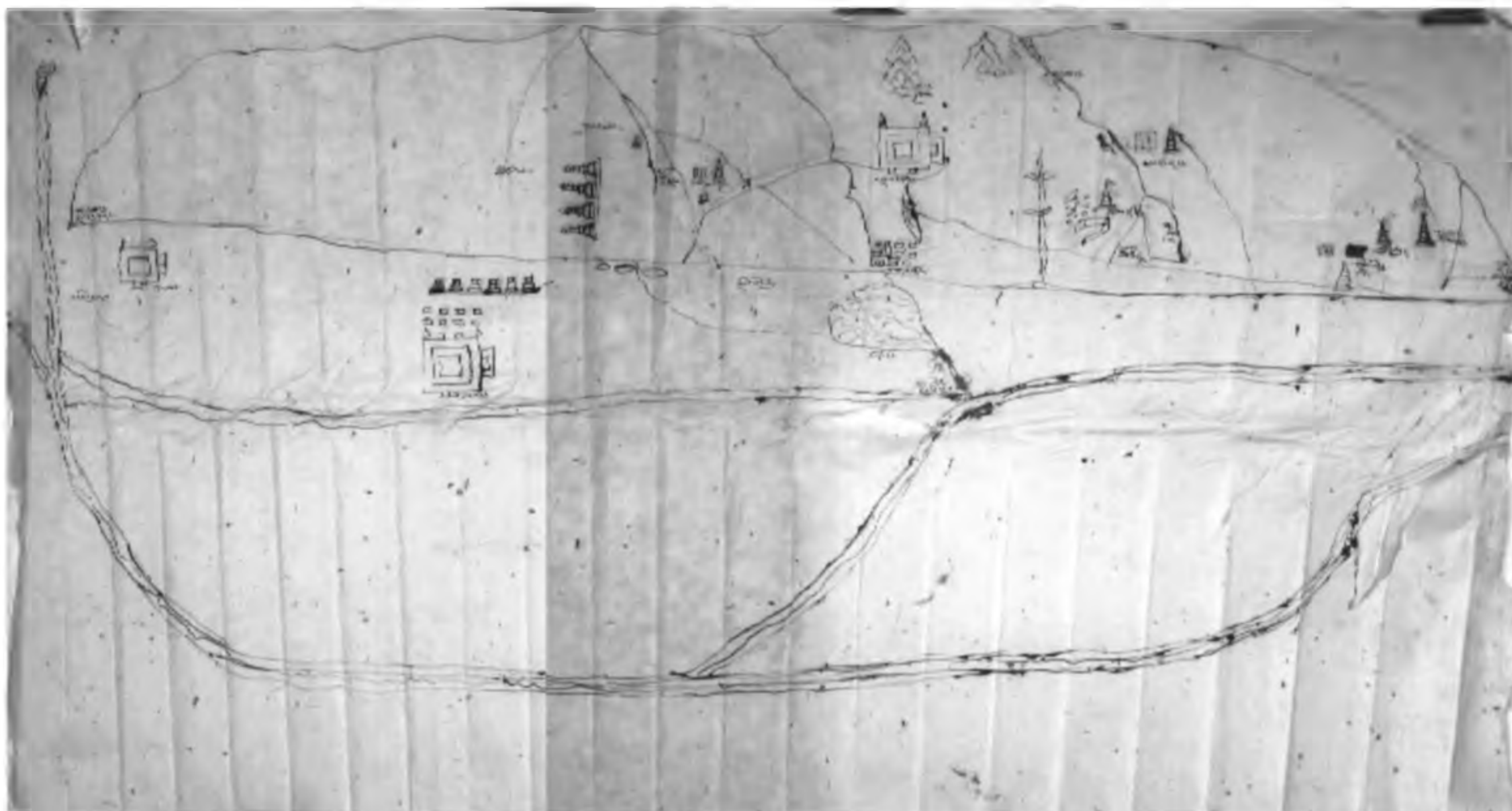
ther obligations on them (ID 1541).[19] On the other hand the serfs (*mi ser*) of sTod lung Tshal bDe gnyis, who lived on the estates of the former sKyid shod pa in Tshal Gung thang and in bDe chen Brag dkar, had to contribute to the maintenance of the monks of bKra shis ljongs Monastery. Sørensen and Hazod (2007: vol. I, 53f) mention references according to which the sKyid shod pa was the actual ruler of Tshal Gung thang and that since the early fifteenth century they had maintained "close bonds with Tshal, and possibly having a secular seat there". The actual seat of the sKyid shod pa was bDe chen Brag dkar (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: vol. II, 759 note 2; Dung dkar 2002: 1003). In 1696, that is to say after the sKyid shod pa had ceased to be the most important patrons of bKra shis ljongs, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho confirmed in a decree that the maintenance for the monks of bKra shis ljongs Monastery should nevertheless continue to be provided by the sTod lung Tshal bde area (ID 1534).

THE EXCHANGE OF sNANG RTSE ESTATE UNDER PHO LHA NAS FOR THREE OTHER ESTATES GRANTED TO THE bKRA SHIS LJONGS *SPRUL SKU*

The estate in sNang rtse, once given to the bKra shis ljongs sprul sku by Gushri qan, appears to have been exchanged under Pho lha nas' rule for some other estates. On 26th April 1735 Pho lha nas issued a decree through which he granted the bKra shis ljongs pa three estates as a substitute for their land in sNang rtse: rGyal sa sgang, Sa sbugs and Ge re (ID 1066). rGyal sa sgang, also called rGyal sgang, rGya sgang, or rGya sa sgang in the documents, as well as Ge re are estates located in the territory of sNe gdong in lHo kha. For the rGyal sgang estate the archives even preserve an old map (ID 1935). I have not yet been able to locate Sa sbugs.

Soon after issuing the above-mentioned decree, in June/July 1735 Pho lha nas confirmed the ownership rights and tax privileges of bKra shis ljongs (ID 1122) with a prestigious document that itemised the estates that were given in lieu of the sNang rtse estate. In 1745 he added a note of confirmation to the same document. The document is written on yellow silk and mounted on red silk. It shows the red imprints of

[19] The document was issued 1694. Another one identified by the Tibet Archives as a document issued in favour of bKra shi ljongs pa in 1695 (ID 1538) is damaged to such a degree that the beneficiary of the document is no longer legible. The seal imprints on both documents are identical with those depicted in the *tham deb* (Chab spel *et al.* 1991: 46).



ID 1935 (inscription on the reverse: *rgya sgang skor*)

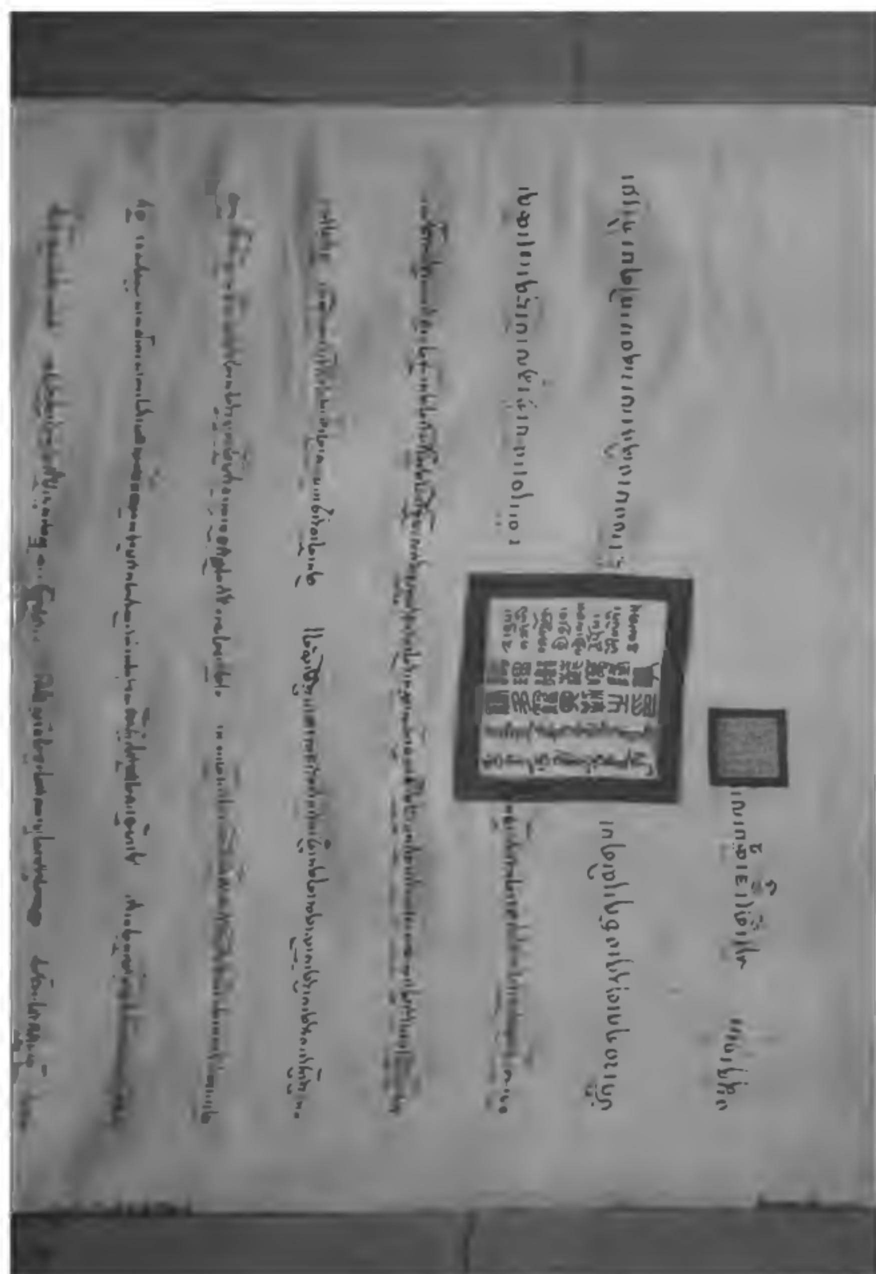
three different seals used by Pho lha nas to authenticate his legal documents. First, there is the imprint of a well-documented seal at the end of the *intitulatio* bearing six columns of 'Phags pa script (Schuh 1981: 70f). Below, the document shows the red imprint of a variety of the silver seal presented to Pho lha nas by the Emperor containing text in Manchu, Chinese, and Tibetan (ibid.: 71f).[20] Finally, immediately following the note of confirmation at the bottom, there is the imprint of yet another seal of Pho lha nas showing four columns of 'Phags pa script in an ornamental frame.

I know of altogether five documents issued by Pho lha nas which bear this seal (ID 1122, 1218, 1221, 1512, 1553). None of the documents' images is clear enough to allow a transliteration. It is most probably identical with seal M, mentioned by Schuh as one of 'Gyur med rnam rgyal's (died 1750) seals which was possibly already used by his father Pho lha nas (Schuh 1981: 103).

That under Pho lha nas the sNang rtse estate was exchanged for some other estates does not mean that the bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku* did not have the ruler's favour, but could as well have represented an award. In a travel document issued by him in favour of the bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku* in 1742 he pointed him out as his chief spiritual teacher (*dbu bla*) (ID 1223). Altogether I know of three travel documents issued by Pho lha nas in 1742 and 1745, all concerning travels of the bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku* to bKra shis lhun po Monastery to see the young Sixth Panchen Lama Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780) (ID 1217, 1553). Obviously, at that time the *sprul sku* was a prominent cleric whose journeys were of such importance that he received travel documents entitling him to demand public support along his way.

In 1752 the Seventh Dalai Lama sKal bzang rgya mtsho (1708–1757) (ID 1434) and in 1774 the first De mo regent Ngag dbang 'jam dpal bde

[20] Though the wording on the imprint shown below and on the one depicted as seal J by Schuh are the same, there are distinct differences with regard to the ductus of the letters as well as with regard to the distribution of the syllables on the various lines. Thus, there obviously existed at least two different versions of that seal. The seal's imprint mentions the *junwang* (郡王) title which according to Petech (1972: 180f) was conferred upon Pho lha nas by the Qianlong Emperor on 11th January 1740. Dung dkar (2002: 1343) confirms that Pho lha nas had received the corresponding seal in 1740. However, on the present document the imprint of the seal has been affixed right at the end of document issued in 1735. The confirmation note of 1745 was then later carefully written around the seal's imprint and authenticated by the imprint of another seal. Currently I am unable to present a satisfactory explanation to solve this contradiction. The possibility that the entire document may be a forgery cannot be excluded.



Lower part of ID 1122

legs rgya mtsho (1757–1777) (ID 1434, 1690) explicitly confirmed the bKra shis ljongs pa's right to own serfs, land, houses, leases, mountains, valley, grass, water, wood, and so forth. In 1784 the *bka' shag*, the Tibetan Council of Ministers, issued another document (ID 1171) in favour of the bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku* which he authenticated by the imprint of his seal (Schuh 1981: 17–19). By referring to previous documents issued by successive rulers of Tibet starting with bsTan 'dzin chos kyi rgyal po, i.e. Gushri qan, and the Fifth Dalai Lama, the issuer confirms that anyone who travelled through nomad territory owned by bKra shis ljongs had to pay a fee for using its pastures. By way of example the document lists monks who travel around to collect donations for their respective monasteries as well as military officers (*brgya dpon*).[21]

Conclusion

At some point in the nineteenth century the incarnation line of bKra shis ljongs ceased to exist and the Kun bde gling Monastery in Lhasa became the owner of bKra shis ljongs and its estates. The last bKra shis ljongs *sprul sku* known to me so far is Blo bzang thub bstan rgyal mtshan who on 20th December 1816, was identified by using the lottery of the golden urn (Chab spel *et al.* 1991: 338, *Skye phreng deb gzhung*). Until now I have seen no sources which tell us about the circumstances that finally led to the extinction of this incarnation line and the incorporation of its monastery and estates into the property of Kun bde gling. bShes gnyen tshul khrims (2001: 125) states that the Kun bde gling *bla brang* later took possession of bKra shis ljongs. The legal documents once issued for bKra shis ljongs thus became part of the Kun bde gling archives. The Kun bde gling *bla brang* definitely benefited from the circumstance that two incarnations of the rTa tshag *rje drung rin po che* had served as regent in Tibet. Kun bde gling emerges as a snowball that over the course of time gathered more and more estates scattered all over Tibet. And among them were also estates that originally had belonged to the incarnation lines of other monasteries.

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[21] There are more kind of possible travellers mentioned. However, since the document is partly damaged the text is not completely preserved.

APPENDIX

ID 1045

Note on transliteration conventions:
(...) denotes the full-length rendering of contractions in the Tibetan text.
{...} denotes emendations.
[...] denotes added syllables.
Z represents the *che rtags* symbol.

Shing glang zla ba gnyis pa'i nang du dar gling pa dar rgyas
kyis kha chems kyi yig dan phul don nged rang da res nad 'di yang
shin tu tshabs che zhing babs lji ba zhig byung bas phugs rigs {ring} mthar
thon bsams pa zhig ma byung bar brten de snga (bkra shis) ljongs Zrje'i
zhal mnga' {snga} nas byang ma ba dang Zzhabs drung chos rje'i drung nas
zhal
'dzin gnang skabs kyang (bkra shis) ljongs rang gi mchod gzhis su
nged rang gi chos rje (rin po che) [la] bde gnyer pa drung nas 'bul sbyor gnang
ba de
bzhin yin pa dang dus da lam kyang nged rang ma shi tsam zhig byung
na rim gro dang shi na yar 'dren brngo {bsngo} ba'i thebs su dge ba rgyun
chags me tog yu ba can du dpon slob Zpaṇ chen (rin po che) gra tshang dang
bcas par blo gtad snying gzhad gis phul bar ya lde chos
mdzad mar skal ba 'os ris byin rjes gzhan ma rin sdings
nged rang gi shul mi skye dman ma bu gra rigs mor {mo} bran phran
bu Z gtsang sde srid (rin po che) dpon blon gyi bka' shog gtan tshigs
de rnga'i {snga'i} gtan rtsis {tshigs} rnga {snga} phyi dang bcas pa rnams
dpon slob (rin po che)
gra tshang rang du snying thag pa nas 'bul sbyor zhus pa yin
rjes dpon slob nas kyang shul mi (bud med) ma bu mor {mo} bran dang bcas
pa rnams ma rgyangs zhing 'das po dran ma dgos pa zhig gnang
dgos zhing de rnga {snga} rje'i zhal mnga' {snga} nas byang ma nas kyi
skabs kyi mgo 'don bdag rkyen las ma g.yos pa bzhin
(mkhyen mkhyen) nged rang 'das rjes dus dang rnam pa (thams cad) du Zdpon
slob pan
chen (rin po che) nas dbus pa'i khyed gra tshang nas nga'i rjes su phan pa'i
brngo {bsngo} ba'i rgyas 'debs gang drag rang gnang dgos rgyu'i don du
nga dar rgyas kyi the'u phul ba yin/

ABBREVIATIONS

ID refers to the identification number of the digitised *Documents of Kündeling Monastery in Tibet of the Digitized Tibetan Archives Material at Bonn University*: http://www.dtab.uni-bonn.de/tibdoc/index1.htm
TBRC refers to the *Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center* in Cambridge, MA: www.tbrc.org.

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HOW TO TAME A WILD MONASTIC ELEPHANT: DREPUNG MONASTERY ACCORDING TO THE GREAT FIFTH

BERTHE JANSEN

INTRODUCTION

Drepung ('Bras spungs) was once the largest monastery in the world in terms of its population. This monastic institution was both influential and wealthy. The combination of masses, money, and influence, however also posed a potential threat to those in power in Central Tibet. The Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1682) attempted to manage the occasionally unruly Drepung by authoring a set of monastic guidelines (*bca' yig*). Written in 1682, the year of the Fifth's passing, the work paints a picture of a monastery that had to deal with a number of unwanted elements: infighting, immigration, corruption, and even the shooting dead of a monk.

Rather than the esoteric contents of pure visions, familiar to us from many Tibetan Buddhist texts, this work offers us a vision of society. This vision of a large, ethnically diverse monastic society in the late 17th century, abounds with the "seamy realities" that Michael Aris lamented that were absent in the History of Drepung (*'Bras spungs chos 'byung*). According to him, this work, written by Geshe Gedün Lodrö in 1974, contained none of "the less savoury but fascinating aspects" of the monastery's internal life (Aris 1978: 398). Rather than a history of Drepung monastery, this article is more of an addition to what is already known from various sources on this institution.[1]

Furthermore, I attempt to demonstrate the value of the genre of monastic guidelines to the study of social history of Tibet. The only scholar to have written on the *bca' yig* in more general terms remains Ter Ellingson (1989: 205–29). To date this valuable article is the most comprehensive discussion of this genre of texts.[2] Ellingson proposes

[1] For George Dreyfus' well-balanced overview of the monastery's history see: http://www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/drepung/essays/# (viewed 09/04/2013).

that this genre derived from sources such as common law and traditional rights, in accordance with the way the larger polity was divided up. In light of the presumed origination in Tibetan traditional "secular" law, he translates *bca' yig* with "monastic constitution" and with "a monastic constitutional document". He explains:

> [...] the Tibetan *bca' yig* are "constitutions" in the sense that they are constitutional-documentary outlines of part of a more extensive body of documentary and traditional fundamentals of monastic government. (*ibid.*: 205)

Ellingson does not give further information on this extensive body of sources, but mentions many of these may be oral (*ibid.*: 210). The translation of *bca' yig* as "monastic constitution" has its problems. The word "constitution" communicates a sense of permanence, indicating that the rules are somehow fundamental. The *bca' yig* texts in contrast usually explicitly state their provisional and contemporary nature. The translation is furthermore problematic because many texts called *bca' yig* are not written for monastic communities. We know for example of *bca' yig* written for hermitages (*ri khrod*)[3] and for communities of tantric practitioners (*sngags pa*) that are not monks.[4]

Certain law codes in Bhutan are also called *bca' yig*, although this is a more recent development. Another interesting use of the word is encountered in contemporary Amdo. In certain village communities in Amdo, people make use of what they themselves call *bca' yig*, which usually take the shape of rules jotted down in a notebook. These *bca' yig* consist of rules on lay religious gatherings (such as the recitation of *mani* mantras) and state the monetary punishments to be paid when one fails to attend, when one does not wear Tibetan dress and when one arrives late at the gathering.[5] The name *bca' yig* also crops up in the context of regulations for certain Himalayan communities. One such

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[2] I am currently in the process of writing my dissertation on pre-modern monastic organisation and social justice in Tibet, in which *bca' yig* are taken as the main source.

[3] Examples of this are the *dBen gnas 'khyung rdzong ri khrod pa rnams kyi khrims su bca' ba'i yi ge thar pa'i them skas*, written by the Seventh Dalai Lama (bsKal bzang rgya mtsho: 434–45); the *De mo srid skyong dang pos dar nor ri khrod la bstsal ba'i bca' yig* (1757), written by the first De mo srid skyong (1757: 151–55).

[4] A very early example of this is a text by Rong zom chos bzang (1042–1136): *Rong zom chos bzang gis rang slob dam tshig pa rnams la gsungs pa'i rwa ba brgyad pa'i bca' yig*: 399–414.

[5] Personal communication with Ciulan Liu, June 2011.

text is for the inhabitants of Pachakshiri, written by Lama Lodre Gyamtso (Bla ma Blo gros rgya mtsho) in the early 1930s and some years later completed by Sonam Gelek Rabtan Lhawang (bSod nams dge legs rab brtan lha dbang). It gives information on the migration of people to an area and the creation of a so-called Hidden Land (*sbas yul*). The text lays down rules on correct moral behaviour, the relationship between the ruler and his subjects, the establishment of law, and social and religious order. It also instructs on how to deal with newcomers or tribal neighbours, and it can be read as a justification of Pachakshiri's inhabitants' rights to inhabit that area (Grothmann 2012: 137–39). The word *bca' yig* appears in yet another context, namely where it indicates a text that contains guidelines on issues such as aesthetics and punctuation for copyists of a *bka' 'gyur*.[6]

The Fifth Dalai Lama himself also did not restrict his *bca' yig* to monastics alone. In 1652, he wrote a set of guidelines for both monks and government officials consisting of rules on how to behave during travel and in the encampments (Cüppers 2007: 37–51). In 1679, he even addressed one such work to all beings under the sun, which was displayed at the top of the three flights of stairs at the Potala Palace.[7] It is clear that the *bca' yig* is a name for a genre of texts that address more audiences than merely the monastic ones. For these reasons both "constitution" and "monastic" are not necessarily correct as descriptors of texts that have "*bca' yig*" in their names. However, in the particular context of my work here I choose to translate the word *bca' yig* as "monastic guidelines", because the text I treat below is limited to the monastic context.

The Guidelines

The set of monastic guidelines by the Fifth Dalai Lama discussed here contains much information on life in the monastery, shining a light both on monastic organisation as well as on the shadier aspects of Drepung

[6] Kun mkhyen rig pa 'dzin pa chos kyi grags pa (1595–1659) wrote the *bKa' 'gyur bzhengs dus dpon yig rnams kyi bca' yig*. (*gSung 'bum* vol. 2: 175–80). This text is briefly discussed in Schaeffer 2009: 31–33. He translates the title as "Guidelines for Chief scribes [*sic*] During the Production of a Kangyur".

[7] Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1679: 12–14.

monastery.[8] Written in 1682, the work confirms later oral accounts of feuding and rogue semi-monks at the Three Seats (*gdan sa gsum*).[9] At the same time the text shows us how the Great Fifth envisioned the future of his former residence. The full title of the work is *Chos sde chen po dpal ldan 'bras dkar spungs pa'i dgon gyi bca' yig tshul 'chal sa srung 'dul ba'i lcags kyo kun gsal me long*. This can be roughly translated as "The monastic guidelines for the great religious centre, the glorious monastery of heaped up white rice, [called] the iron hook that tames the elephant (*sa srung*) of bad behaviour: the entirely clear mirror" (henceforth *'Bras spungs bca' yig*).[10] It appears that this text—at least the original version—was thought to have certain special powers. The disciplinarian (*dge skos*) at Nechung (*gNas chung*) monastery, who used to live in Drepung in Tibet, remarked about this work:

> We call this text written by the Fifth Dalai lama the *bca' yig chen mo*. It could only be kept by the general disciplinarian (*tshogs chen zhal ngo*). During the Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*) the Drepung monastic guidelines would be "invited" (*gdan 'dren zhu ba*) to Lhasa. This disciplinarian would carry the text, accompanied by his assistants (*chab ril*) and *phagdampa* (*'phags gdams pa*), totalling about 20 people. There exists an oral account that this text could fly. When transported to Lhasa, the *bca' yig* would not go underneath the stūpa which is between the Potala and this one hill. Instead it would fly up and then circumambulate the Potala and land back into the disciplinarian's hands. For twenty-one days, during the festival, everyone would abide by the rules of the Great Prayer Festival.[11] On the way back, the text would again fly up. This is an anecdote (*gsung rgyud*), I have of course not seen this myself. I was told that before 1959 the original of this *bca' yig* was kept safe at

[8] This work and its contents have been previously briefly treated by Dakpa (2003: 172–74).

[9] For an account of the life of a Sera "rogue monk" (*ldob ldob*) see Khedrup *et al.* 1986.

[10] This text has been reprinted in (at least) two volumes: *Bod kyi snga rabs khrims srol yig cha bdams bsgrigs* (1989: 275–323) and in *bCa' yig phyogs sgrig: gangs can rig brgya'i sgo 'byed lde mig ces bya ba* 11 (1989: 169–213) (henceforth *'Bras spungs bca' yig* 2). It can also be found in the Fifth's Dalai Lama's *gsung 'bum*, vol. 20, in *'Phags bal bod dang bod chen rgya hor sog pos mtshon mchod dman bar ma mtha' dag gi spyi bye brag legs nyes 'byed pa'i bca' yig bsko 'ja' sogs bkod pa khrims gnyis gser shing phun tshogs 'dod 'jo*: 106b–132a (henceforth *'Bras spungs bca' yig* 3). Here the first version is mainly used.

[11] The whole city of Lhasa would be under the rule of Drepung monastery during that festival. The general disciplinarian would have final authority over the population of monks and lay-people at that time. For an eyewitness account see Bell (1998 [1946]: 58).

> the monastery and a copy of it was being used for general purposes. All the versions of the text present there must have been destroyed because when I became a monk at Drepung there were no monastic guidelines there at all.[12]

Not only is this set of monastic guidelines seen as significant in the way described above, it seems that some still see the relevance of this text for Tibetan monasticism today. gShes gnyen tshul khrims, in an article about this work, devotes a section on the value of the *'Bras spungs bca' yig* to the organisation of monasteries in Tibet today.[13] The article further examines the text as a whole, enumerating the various points that he sees as important, unfortunately without attempting to put these monastic guidelines into their historical context.

Compared to other monastic guidelines—the shortest of which may consist of just one folio—the *'Bras spungs bca' yig* is a long text that starts with a rather lengthy semi-historical introduction, beginning with a discussion of the different world-systems. After describing various previous Buddhas, the author goes on to relate the origins of the Buddhist teachings and their introduction to Tibet. It comes as no surprise that, after having praised the various Dharma-kings and the great Tsongkhapa (*Tsong kha pa*), he relates the life of one of his disciples and the founder of Drepung 'Jam dbyangs bkra shis dpal ldan (1379–1449, also known as 'Jam dbyangs chos rje) and the history of the monastery itself.

Some general points on the nature of the monkhood follow, which he supports by citing both Vinaya and sūtra material (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 294–99). Citing the **Bhikṣupriya-sūtra* (*dGe slong la rab tu gces pa'i mdo*), he stresses the pivotal role of ethical discipline: "The ethical discipline of some [leads to] happiness, while the ethical discipline of others [leads to] suffering. The one who has ethical discipline [will have] happiness, the one who has faulty ethical discipline [will have] suffering".[14] In this sūtra, the person who does not keep the vows, but

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[12] Personal communication with Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, August, 2012.

[13] This section is called: "*bca' yig gi nang don 'ga' zhig la dgon pa'i da yod kyi sgril srol khag 'thus sgo tshang du gtong rgyur dpyad gzhi rin thang yod pa'i skor*" (bShes gnyen tshul khrims 2006: 46).

[14] "*la la'i tshul khrims bde ba ste/ la la'i tshul khrims sdug bsngal yin/ tshul khrims ldan pa bde ba ste/ tshul khrims 'chal ba sdug bsngal yin*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 299). The version in the Derge Kangyur reads for the third line "*tshul khrims ldan pa bde ba'i mchog*" (D. 302, vol. 72): 126b.

still claims to be a *bhikṣu*, is compared to a crazed elephant drunk on wine. It appears that the Great Fifth had this analogy in mind when he created the title of this set of monastic guidelines. He then addresses the issue of *dkor*: the using or abusing of the Sangha's possessions (*ibid.*: 299). The *Vinayavibhaṅgha* is cited: "It is preferable for one who does not have proper vows [or] whose discipline is faulty, to eat iron balls that are ablaze with fire than to eat the alms from [people] in the vicinity".[15]

The Dalai Lama explains this by stating that there will be heavy karmic repercussions for a person who does not abide in the trainings or for a layperson who uses *dkor*.[16] And again he cites canonical material, this time the *Sūryagarbhasūtra*, which warns that for those who have become householders, it would be easier to take on a fire equal in size to mount Meru than to use that which is the Sangha's.[17] Out of context, what the Fifth Dalai Lama addresses here may be read as a discussion on Buddhist ethics. However, it is clear that what is addressed and carefully supported by canonical quotations is a very topical and local problem, namely the exponential growth of the monastic population and the questionable motives and behaviour of some of the inhabitants of Drepung monastery during the late 17th century.

Like other *bca' yig* in the Gelug (*dge lugs*) tradition it is likely that this text was read out to everyone at Drepung by the general disciplinarian at important occasions.[18] The dangers of the misappropriation of monastic goods was thus something the Dalai Lama wanted everyone to be aware of. Later references in the text demonstrate the reason for this: there appeared to have been a significant number of inhabitants of Drepung who were not exactly monks. One such reference concerns the issue of farming, in which the Fifth forbids monks to work in the fields in spring and autumn, unless there are:

> among the residents (*gzhi ba*), those without vows and who are after *dkor* who want to do this, then they need to be given lay-clothes for which the

[15] "*lung rnam 'byed du/ lcags gong me lce 'bar ba dag/ zos par gyur pa mchog yin gyi/ tshul 'chal yang dag mi sdom pas/ yul 'khor bsod snyoms za ba min*" (*ibid.*).

[16] "*[...] bslab pa dang mi ldan pa'i gang zag gis dkor la longs spyod pa dang der ma zad khyim pas spyad kyang de dang cha 'dra ba'i nyes dmigs bzod par dka' zhing [...]*" (*ibid.*).

[17] "*nyi ma'i snying po' mdor/ lhun po dang ni 'dra ba'i me/ blang bar bya ste bzod pa sla'i/ khyim par gyur pas dge 'dun gyi/ longs spyad par ni mi bya'o*" (*ibid.*).

[18] There are no agreed upon times or religious festivals during which they were read out. Each monastery had its own customs.

> permission of the disciplinarian (*dge skos*) has been asked. They are not allowed to do this in monastic robes.[19]

This shows that there were people living in Drepung—who would normally be wearing monastic robes—but who in fact had no vows. Furthermore, these people clearly fell under the "jurisdiction" of the disciplinarians at Drepung. At the same time they were, apparently, accepted as residents of the monastery. Perhaps a parallel can be found with the *ban log*, the "monk rebels" Ekvall encountered during his fieldwork in Amdo between 1925 and 1941. These were "debarred from being monks", because they had broken one of the root vows, but who for various reasons continued to live in their quarters in the monastery, wore the robes, and were still in high standing outside the monastery. A *ban log* often found alternative means to support himself and was regularly engaged in business both for his own sake as well as for the monastery's (Ekvall 1959/60: 210).

Elsewhere the issue of questionable monks comes up in a discussion of the seating arrangements during the assembly. As is common, the educated monks sit at the front (*gral stod*) according to seniority, the intermediate ones sit in the middle (*gral rked*), while the "riffraff that is after *dkor*" sits at the back (*gral gsham*). The phrase used to express this is *dkor phyir 'breng mi 'bags rengs rnams*, which is not entirely clear but is most definitely very pejorative, which my translation tries to convey. *'bags* means polluted or degenerated, while *rengs* can mean stiff or obstinate. Whatever the exact meaning, it is clear that the author here speaks of the presence of people who were not in pursuit of higher goals in the monastery (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 300, 1). He uses the above idiom again and writes:

> Previously, according to the speeches made by earlier honourable monks that concern examinations, there was no custom of restricting the riffraff who are after *dkor*. However, nowadays, if all are allowed in, then the junior monks who are involved in study will not be able to enter [the assembly hall]. Therefore of course not all monks [can enter], and the riffraff, who have not been there beyond eight years or those who have not passed the five higher exams, should not be let in.[20]

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[19] "*gzhi ba'i khrod nas sdom ldan min pa'i dkor phyir 'brang mkhan gyis byed pa shar na dge skos la gnang ba zhus pa'i skya chas sprad nas byed pa ma gtogs btsun chas kyis byas mi chog*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 312).

[20] "*sngar lha btsun cha bas rgyug tshad mdzad pa'i gtam tsam las dkor phyir 'breng mkhan gyi 'bags rengs bkag srol med kyang da cha tshang mar byas na chos grwa*

The implications of effectively banning certain people from attending the assembly only become clear when one is aware that, generally speaking, the larger monasteries in pre-modern Tibet did not sponsor monks, nor provide (sufficient) food (Dreyfus 2003: 68). However, tea was served and monetary donations were handed out mainly during assemblies. Therefore to deny the riffraff entry to the assembly-hall was paramount to denying them a means of income, which served to disincentivise the less sincere renunciates from crowding the monastery.

The presence of people who were not quite monks highlights the complexity of the monastic institution, in which people who abided by different rules lived alongside each other. For the Fifth Dalai Lama the problem lay not in the mere presence of these "vow-less" men—for they were tolerated—but in the possibility of them misappropriating the property of the Sangha, and giving the monastery (and consequently the Sangha as a whole) a bad name. For that reason he also created guidelines that restricted the distribution of monastic goods to those monks who were involved in either studies or in monastic governance. Throughout the text, the Fifth Dalai Lama emphasises and encourages the quality of the monks and not their quantity. This, in part, was due to the rapid increase of population at Drepung in the period after the founding of the dGa' ldan pho brang in 1642. Unfortunately, we do not exactly know the ratio of monks and non-monks present at Drepung during the late 17th century. We do however have a rough idea of the total number of Drepung's inhabitants at that time.

Overpopulation and Mass Monasticism

Any claims concerning the number of monks at Drepung are largely based on speculation. When the Great Prayer Festival was reinstated in 1517, around 1500 Drepung monks were said to be present (*dGa' ldan chos 'byung*: 115). This means that possibly there were around 2000 monks at that time. According to the author of the *dGa' ldan chos 'byung*, sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705), the monastery

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'grim mkhan gyi btsun chung mi tshud 'dug pas grwa pa gang yin brjod med dang 'bags rengs kyi rigs lo brgyad dang rgyug tshad mtho lnga ma longs na mi gtong" (*ibid.*: 301).

of Drepung under the auspices of the Dalai Lama grew "like a lake in summer or a waxing moon", and it therefore was difficult to calculate an exact number. The regent nevertheless estimated that the monk-population consisted of over 4200 monks and was still growing.[21] Later on, 4400 became the traditionally known number of monks. Before the middle of the 20th century the estimate was 10000: when the Fourteenth Dalai Lama went to Drepung in 1958 the official count was 9980, but not all monks can have been counted (Lodrö 1974: 192).

Melvin Goldstein theorises that size, not quality, was crucial to monasticism in traditional Tibet, and that Tibetans believed that all monks, even the bad ones, were better than lay-people. He cites the proverb "*'jig rten rab la chos ba'i* [*sic: pa'i*] *mtha' skyes*": the worst religious practitioner is better than the best of the worldly ones (Goldstein 2009: 2). From this apparent emphasis on the number of monks, Goldstein proposes that there was a "mass monastic ideology" in place which "gave equivalence to all monks regardless of their knowledge or spirituality"(*ibid.*: 14) and that "[...] monasticism was pursued with an implicit ideology of mass monasticism, in that it enrolled as many monks as sought entrance and expelled very few" (Goldstein 1998: 15). He uses the monastery of Drepung as an example for his argument. It cannot be denied that over the centuries Drepung sustained large amounts of monks who were not directly involved in education or formal religious practice. But was to have as many monks as possible really seen as a desideratum by the monastic authorities? Surely, ideology, however implicit, will only become apparent when studying rules developed by monastic policy-makers themselves.

The Fifth Dalai Lama, who was for many obvious reasons heavily invested in Drepung monastery, clearly sees the overpopulation as a big problem. The monastic guidelines give the sense of a monastery bursting at the seams. The unchecked population growth meant that the monastery attracted all types of people from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds. This picture of monastic growth that the Great Fifth sketches in his *bca' yig* is confirmed by other historical sources. Stein, for example, suggests that the general population of monks appears to have increased since the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama. He

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[21] "*de yang chos grwa chen po 'di nyid rje bla ma phyag na padma'i 'phrin las kyi dbang gis dbyar mtsho'am yang zla'i cha shas ltar je 'phel la tshad bzung dka' na'ang/ da lta dge dgon gyi yang rtse ang med dge 'dun bzhi stong nyis brgya lhag bcas 'du'o*" (*ibid.*: 137).

mentions a census of 1663, but gives no source (Stein 1972 [1962]: 139–40).

As is well known, during the start of the Fifth Dalai Lama's reign, some decades before these monastic guidelines were written, the contact with the Mongols became more enduring. This also meant that Mongolian monks increasingly went to Tibetan monasteries to study. As the monastery was directly connected to the Dalai Lama, many of them entered Drepung (Snellgrove and Richardson 1986 [1968]: 199). At the same time, numerous new Gelug monasteries were founded in Khams and Amdo, while other existing monasteries were "converted" to the Gelug school. Most of these new monasteries were branches (*yan lag*) of one of the Three Seats. This established networks between Central Tibet and the outer regions, the importance of which historians of Tibet have not yet fully appreciated.[22] Monks were sent out from Sera, Ganden, and Drepung to populate and educate these monasteries (*dGa' ldan chos 'byung*: 457), but presumably a fair number of monks from those faraway monasteries went to one of the Three Seats to further their studies. Although no exact numbers are known, the influx of a considerable number of East-Tibetan and foreign monks must have put a strain on the monastery.

The section of the *'Bras spungs bca' yig* cited earlier shows just one example of how having a large number of monks in the monastery was not seen as something desirable for pragmatic reasons. In addition to the objections that are of a practical nature, the Fifth Dalai Lama's position challenges Goldstein's claim that there was an implicit ideology of mass-monasticism, which favoured quantity over quality. This is because the Fifth Dalai Lama explicitly states the exact opposite of Goldstein's assertion:

> If, due to a specific condition, one cannot keep the vows, it is more beneficial to give them up than to keep them hypocritically. For [the **Bhikṣupriya-sūtra*] says: "It is better to physically be a lay-person who has never for a moment kept the trainings, than to be someone who holds

[22] The interrelatedness of monasteries has been briefly treated by Miller (1961: 197–203). The monastic guidelines that were written for the new or converted monasteries at that time are valuable sources that help us understand the position of these branches in relation to their mother monasteries (*ma dgon*) and the way these networks functioned. In addition, they can be read as tools employed by the dGa' ldan pho brang government to exert greater power over the regions that were in many ways still out of its reach.

> the banner of the Sugata[23] who does not keep to the trainings, [if only] for one moment".[24]

It appears then that one cannot simply uncritically accept an a-historical and essentialist phrase such as "the ideology of mass monasticism". Although there were at times masses of monks occupying the Tibetan monasteries, this does not mean that having great numbers of monks was ever seen as an objective, even implicitly. In fact, the claim that the Tibetan monastic system "enrolled as many monks as sought entrance" (Goldstein 1998: 15) cannot possibly hold true, for there exist numerous monastic guidelines that expressly state limitations to the entrance of the monastery. These monastic guidelines both exclude monks-to-be on the basis of their social background as well as based on worries about overpopulation.[25]

Although it is true that entry to the monastery did not necessarily depend upon a certain level of education or the heartfelt wish of the individual to devote the rest of his life to religion, which may have been the case in other Asian countries where monastic Buddhism existed, the reasons for the large numbers of monks should not be sought in ideology but in the social, economic, and political historical processes of which monasticism was a part. For Drepung monastery, the founding of the dGa' ldan pho brang, a wider pool of lay-donors, the personal involvement of the Dalai Lama, and the widening network of Gelug monasteries are just a few possible explanations for Drepung monastery's sudden growth. The broader issue of why, compared to other countries where Buddhist monasticism throve, the numbers of monks were so much higher in Tibet, has thus not yet been answered satisfactorily.

Various sources give percentages of the monastic population that range from 10 to as high as 25 percent of the population. I suspect that while these numbers may have been accurate at certain times, from a statistical point of view they are still open to misinterpretation. This is

[23] "Holding the banner of the Sugata" means wearing the Buddhist monastic robes.

[24] "*sgos dbang gis bsrung ma nus na chab* [*sic*: *'chab*, see *'Bras spungs bca' yig* 2: 191] *sems kyis gnas pa las sdom pa phul ba phan yon che ste/ de nyid las/ gang zhig bslab pa mi gnas pas/ bde bzhin gshegs rgyal mtshan 'dzin pa las/ bslab pa mi gnad skad cig la/ gzugs por khyim par gnas pa bzang*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 299).

[25] For a discussion of the limitations of entrance to the monastery according to the *bca' yig* and its broader implications for Tibet's social history see my forthcoming article to be published in the Proceedings of the 2012 Kobe ISYT Conference (Jansen forthcoming).

because what tends to not be taken into account is that in the largest monasteries in Central Tibet (for usually the percentages of monks only pertain to that area) the number of "immigrant monks", for example people from Mongolia, Kham and Amdo, must have been very high. Most of these monks were not permanently residing at those monasteries. Thus even though one in four males resident in Central Tibet may have been a monk, this does not mean that one in four boys born in Central Tibet would eventually be sent to the monastery. Immigration and semi-permanent residence are thus issues that need to be taken into account when making umbrella-statements about the state of Tibet's societal composition. The Drepung monastic guidelines address these issues of immigration and the presence of foreign monks.

The Issue of Immigration

In connection to the problem of overpopulation, the issue of Mongolian and other monks from "outside" are specifically addressed on multiple occasions. The influx of a great number of foreign monks, who spoke different languages or dialects and had different habits, must have caused not just a few clashes. One of these clashes is actually mentioned in the Drepung monastic guidelines: apparently a Mongolian had fired a gun, thereby killing a monk who—judging by his appellation—must have been a scholar-monk (*dpe cha ba*). This episode seems to have occurred in the context of inter-collegial feuding, for the text states:

> Even though previously, when the monastic houses (*khams tshan*) fought over people and possessions, arrows and catapults (*mda' rdo sgyogs*) used to be employed, other than the Mongolian dNgos grub rgya mtsho firing a gun and killing Glu 'bum rab 'byams pa, nothing else has occurred. Still, from now on firearms should not be used.[26]

The author goes on to warn that, in the case of illegal actions (*khrims 'gal rigs*) such as causing a rift in the Sangha and bringing down the teachings by, for example, colleges and houses fighting with each other,

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[26] *"khams tshan rnams mi nor sogs kyi don du 'thab 'dzings kyi dus mda' rdo sgyogs sogs kyi mtshon pa ni sngar nas byed srol 'dug kyang sog po dngos grub rgya mtsho me mda' brgyab nas glu 'bum rab 'byams pa bsad pa tsam las ma byung 'dug pas slad nas kyang me mda'i srol mi byed"* (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 311).

the ringleaders together with their gang shall be punished according to state law (*rgyal khrims*).[27] Monks generally speaking could only be tried according to state law in the case of serious crimes. In contrast, monastic guidelines regularly appear to be imposing judicial authority over lay-people who found themselves on monastic grounds.[28] Although the above does not necessarily suggest that the violent feuds that were taking place at Drepung were motivated by xenophobia (or perhaps simply culture-clashes), the *'Bras spungs bca' yig* generally shows a bias against the newcomers and imposes a number of rules that were clearly prompted by the presence of foreigners.

It appears that the food and shares of offerings that were handed out during occasions such as at the *rigs grwa* scholastic gathering[29] were traditionally distributed via monastic societies (*skyid sdug*).[30] These societies were organised on the basis of the monasteries the monks originally came from. The *bca' yig* under examination here shows that not all monks were members of these societies, but that those who were not had to be under the supervision of the colleges. Later on, people entered the monastery without the general or the normal disciplinarians knowing about their background and intentions. The Fifth Dalai Lama mentions Indians and Newaris (*bal po*), who did not belong to an official monastic association (*mi tshan*) or house (*khams tshan*), as well as the Chinese, Hor, and Mongolians who were all unknown and arrived, one relying on the other, thereby "becoming each other's accomplices". He remarks:

> Thus people, who only have symbolically gained the external marks of a monk, are all filling up the assembly hall, both on the inside and the outside. And when all [these] kinds of people gather at a place like the Barkor, one cannot even be sure that arson will not take place.[31]

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27 "*grwa sa phan tshun dang khams tshan 'thab rtsod kyis mtshon dge 'dun gyi dbyen dang bstan gshig khrims 'gal byas rigs la gte po sde tshan dang bcas par rgyal khrims kyis tsa ra skabs thob byed pa 'dir gsal ma dgos*" (*ibid.*).

28 This is evidenced in some of the monastic guidelines researched by Huber (2004: 127–52).

29 This was a yearly gathering at the start of the summer retreat during which the serving abbot gave each studying monk money and food (*gtong sgo*). See bShes gnyen tshul khrims 2006: 42.

30 Not much appears to be known about the function of these monastic societies. For the role of lay societies, which are also called *skyid sdug*, see Miller (1956: 157–70).

31 "*[...] btsun pa'i rtags cha lugs tsam tshang ba rtags su bkod nas thams cad tshogs pa'i 'du khang gi phyi nang mdo sbugs thams cad khengs dkyin yod 'dug pa bar*

He concludes that for that reason people who are not a member of a society should not be sent out (to the scholastic gathering). This informs us that the Dalai Lama felt that monks who were not connected to a society formed a security threat. The fact that those people were usually "foreigners"—which is to say, non-Central Tibetans—must have been a big factor in this. This statement is furthermore interesting because we do not often find information on the ethnic make-up of the monk-population in Tibet. It is safe to assume that Drepung during the late 17th century must have been one of the most ethnically diverse Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.

It appears that the Fifth found the attitudes of the outside monks to be rather different. The text speaks of monks from Mongolia and Kham at the tantric college (*sngags pa grwa tshang*) who were unable to engage in the study of logic (*mtshan nyid ma nus*) and would only learn a bit of tantra (*sngags chos phran bu re bslabs*) and then return to their place of origin. This unrestricted coming and going, he mentions, is potentially harmful, because they, the outsiders (*phyogs mi*),[32] are then not taken off the monk-register (*grwa rgyun*) at one place, but then end up living at another college or monastery. This may result in the tantric college ending up empty. He then suggests that the numbers of monks should be counted during festivals and formal sessions (*dus thog*), presumably as opposed to merely counting the names of monks listed in the register (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 313).

In the context of sending monks out to other monastic centres, the Great Fifth warns against people who would go for the wrong reasons. Monks who go out to *Sangphu* (*Gsang phu*) needed to have passed the *phar phyin* (*prajñāpāramitā*) exams, and to abide by the rules on how long to stay and teach for,[33] as well as to make sure that the fixed number of "communal tea services" (*mang ja*) was implemented. This prop-

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skor lta bur mi sna tshogs bsdad na me mi brgyag pa'i nges pa'ang mi 'dugs pas skyid sdug then par mi phan pa rnams gtong sa med cing" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 302).

[32] In the vocabulary of the Fifth Dalai Lama, *phyogs mi* are people who were originally from another monastery but arrived at Drepung monastery later in life. It was thought that such people would go to Drepung to study, but this *bca' yig* makes clear that they were at Drepung for a variety of reasons. The opposite of *phyogs mi* is *gzhi ba*: (permanent) residents.

[33] Sangphu, originally a *bka' 'dams* pa institution, was a large and important scholastic centre, to which monks from Drepung often went. Dreyfus mentions that monks travelled from Drepung to Sangphu quite freely, which changed after the civil war, which lasted until the midst of the seventeenth century. See: http://www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/drepung/essays/# (viewed 09/04/2013).

er behaviour was unlike that of "some people from Kham and Mongolia (*khams sog*) who would do this for one of two days but were then known only to abuse their power. Thus from now on, rather than giving numerous endless explanations, one is not to behave as one pleases".[34]

Here monks from Kham and Mongolia are singled out as being in the habit of abusing their power. It is perhaps fair to say that while there was a bias against outsiders, this bias was not limited to monks alone. In the monastic guidelines, the Fifth Dalai Lama addresses the issue of women visiting the monastery. The text appears to state that even though up until that time Tibetan women (*bod mo*) were, but Mongolian women (*sog mo*) were not given permission to stay overnight at the monastery, if the woman in question is a donor (*sbyin bdag*) she may stay for a limited number of days.[35]

Generally speaking, the reason the Fifth Dalai Lama wanted the monastery to be more restrictive with regards to its entry-policy may have been that he wanted Drepung's population to be more respectable, as well as religiously homogeneous, this to avoid clashes but also to keep the tradition. He writes:

> Those who have come looking for protection from danger, such as people with other philosophical views, outcasts (*g.yung po*), escapees, thieves, those who are after food and clothes and the like should not be attended to (*mi bsten*). Because when the individual colleges and the houses give their prerogative (*thob pa*) as a reason, then this is [just] a minor consideration:[36] this will eventually lead to disgraceful actions, due to the bad disposition [of these people].[37]

The Great Fifth clearly wanted to avoid the monastery becoming a safe-haven for all sorts of people, most notably people with different views

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[34] "*[...] khams sog la las nyi ma gcig gnyis brgyab nas log pa'i dbang gzhed kho na byas zer ba'ang da nas bzung kha grangs ma rdzogs par bshad pa rgyag pa las gang 'dod byed sa med*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 310).

[35] Admittedly, the language is not entirely clear here: "*bar skabs nas bod mo ma gtogs sog mo'i rigs la zhag sdod sogs la'ang gnang ba par bkab zhu yin med 'dug kyang sbyin bdag bud med yin na gnang ba zhus pa'i zhag re tsam dang*" (*ibid.*: 312).

[36] This implies that there is thought to be insufficient justification for letting those types of people in. I am indebted to Jonathan Samuels for this translation and gloss of the idiom *dgos pa chung*.

[37] "*[...] lta grub mi gcig pa'i mi dang g.yung po dang bros po'i rigs dang rkun po dang lto gos tshol thabs sogs 'jigs skyabs kyis yong ba rnams grwa tshang dang khams tshan so sos thob pa rgyu mtshan du byas te ngan mtshang phyir skyel gyi phugs zhabs 'dren las spros pa'i dgos pa chung nges su 'dug pas mi bsten*" (*ibid.*: 312).

(*lta grub mi gcig pa'i mi*), which probably refers to adherents to other schools. Later he also states that only the prayers and rituals of the Gelug, in combination with the general teachings (*bstan pa spyi*) should be used within the monastic compound. This section was paraphrased in a work by Pabongkha rinpoche (also known as bDe chen snying po, 1878–1941), in which the author appears to have used it to show that there was historical precedent for expelling monastics on the basis of their views.[38] While he edited out the section that deals with outcastes and the like, Phabongkha rinpoche probably employed the Fifth's unambivalent statement on keeping the various schools and their practices separated to suit his own religio-political agenda. What the Fifth Dalai Lama seems to have attempted, as is apparent in the above statement but also throughout the text, is to prevent the colleges from becoming too independent. His concern stemmed from the danger that with the influx of new monks certain colleges would change, culturally, religiously, and politically. One of his concerns was then to maintain the unity and relative homogeneity of Drepung.

A Healthy Monastic Economy

The increase in the monastic population is an indication that the monastery was prospering. The late 17th century must have been a time of abundance for Drepung monastery. There was a stable government, to which it was intimately connected, and its popularity with the Mongolians must also have attracted new sponsors. It was perhaps due to the good economic situation of the monastery that so many people felt drawn to the monastery in the first place. The guidelines give a good idea of the amounts of offerings coming in and show concerns with regard to their correct distribution. Again, this is partly related to

[38] *mDo sngags skor gyi dris lan sna tshogs phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa* 41a: "*yang lnga ba chen pos dpal dlan 'bras spungs kyi bca' yig sogs su'ang/ lta grub mi gcig pa re gnyis byung ba sngar nas 'bud bzhin pa yin pas/ zhes dang/ grub mtha' 'gyur la re'i dgos dbang gis gzhan phyogs pa'i rigs ched gnyer bcug na min pa lta grub mi gcig pa'i mi sogs yongs pa rnams grwa tshang dang khams tshan so sos thob ba rgyu mtshan du byas te ngan mtshang phyir skyel gyis phugs zhabs 'dren las spros pa'i dgos pa chung nges su 'dug pas mi bsten/ zhes dang/ bstan pa spyi dang dge lugs kyi chos spyod ma gtogs grub mtha' gzhan gyi gsol 'debs sogs chos spyod kyi rigs gling gseb tu 'don sa med cing/ zhes sogs*" (bDe chen snying po, *gSung 'bum* vol. 6: 399–618). The underlined sections are taken from the *'Bras spungs bca' yig*.

the concept of *dkor*, but of course also has to do with making sure the monastic colleges and houses more or less got an equal share, to prevent further resentment and feuding among the Drepung monks. At the same time, another issue that these guidelines negotiate—and this can be found in many other monastic guidelines—is that of benefactor satisfaction. That is, the monastic managers needed to be able to show the benefactors that their donations went to a worthy and "virtuous" cause. The correct allocation of gifts was important in this matter, as our author notes:

> These days it is increasingly the habit of the monastic houses or the teachers, when they have got their share of allowances (*za sgo*), to give handouts to all kinds of lowly drifters. Even the benefactors were dismayed at this, namely that the communal tea services (*mang ja*) and the donations (*'gyed*) would not get to each of the colleges and that they would go unrecorded. This is a very great wrong amounting to depriving the general Sangha of income.[39]

The set phrase that the Fifth Dalai Lama uses here, namely: "to deprive the general Sangha of income" ("*spyi'i dge 'dun gyi 'du sgo 'phrogs pa*"), is one of the five secondary acts of immediate consequence (*nye ba'i mtshams med lnga*) (*Tshig mdzod*: 961; Silk 2007: 265). This served to highlight the gravity of the matter: it appears that people in Drepung were giving away their donations rather randomly. This seems to have angered the donors and also went against certain rules on monastic economy that have proven to be problematic throughout the ages.[40] Perhaps the recipients of these handouts were exactly the people the Fifth Dalai Lama wanted to deter from staying in the monastery: for the "lowly drifters" assumedly would be those unconnected to either a college or a society. The text goes on to explain exactly how certain donations are to be divided, demonstrating which positions were the better "paid" ones (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 304–306).

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[39] *"dus phyis nye phyogs che zhing khams tshan dang dge rgan ci rigs kyis za sgo gtso bor bton nas mi khyams khungs med mtha' dag la bdag rkyen sprad gshis/ sbyin bdag rnams kyang ha las te mang ja dang 'gyed so so'i grwa tshang la mi bsgyur tho med yong yod 'dug pa/ dge 'dun spyi'i 'du sgo 'phrogs pa'i gnod tshabs shin tu che ba 'dug pa [...]"* (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 304).

[40] In Indic Vinaya texts a distinction between personal property and the property of the general Sangha was made. Sometimes these texts dealt with problems of the distribution of donations among the members of the monastic community. See for example Schopen (1995: 101–23).

It was not just that there were problems with the mere allocation of goods; there also appeared to have been a profusion of food at certain times. The author warns that if the monastic community had too much tea and soup, the leftovers needed to be made into fodder and nothing else.[41] Presumably this means that the food scraps could not be given (or worse: sold) to beggars and other needy people in the surroundings. Again, the reason for this restriction is likely to be a "Vinayic" one: what is intended for the Sangha should not end up in the hands of "undeserving" lay-people. Interestingly, this is not entirely in line with the view of Lama Tsongkhapa, one of whose monastic guidelines is paraphrased by our author towards the end of the text (*ibid.*: 319–20). This work, which the Fifth claims as either Tsongkhapa's or *the* first *bca' yig*,[42] was probably written in 1417 (*bya lo*) (Blo bzang grags pa'i dpal 1417a: 319). It has been a great source of inspiration for many later Gelug writers of monastic guidelines. However, in a *bca' yig* for Byams pa gling monastery written in the same year,[43] Lama Tsongkhapa takes a clear stance on the issue of redistributing goods beyond the monastic community. He instructs the monks not to let beggars into the monastic compounds, but instead to leave them waiting at the boundary-marker. Food can be given to them there by an *upāsaka* (*dge bsnyen*) (Blo bzang grags pa'i dpal 1417b: 251a). This means that there clearly existed different ways to deal with the problems of redistributing monastic goods vis-à-vis helping those in need.[44]

The author addresses another issue to do with distribution, namely that while sometimes there was insufficient distribution, apparently on other occasions the dividing of the goods went too far:

> When donations that are not supposed to be divided up [and given] to the Sangha, are made into pieces, it renders the wealth (*nor*) unusable. Therefore, rather than dividing it, the benefit would be greater to the general community (*spyi so*)[45] if it were to be deposited at the treasury of the general administration (*spyi pa'i phyag mdzod*).[46]

[41] "*ja thug kyang mang skyon gyis dge 'dun rnams kyis bzhes mi thub cing/ snod dpyad sogs la gzan pa las spros pa'i dgos pa gzhan mi 'dug gshis*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 310).

[42] The wording is ambiguous: "*dge 'dun gyi khrims su bca' ba dang por mdzad par*".

[43] Versions of this text can be found in various places. An online version is here: http://www.asianclassics.org/release6/flat/S5275MC6_T.TXT

[44] The issue of the level of social responsibility at the Tibetan monasteries and the extent to which this relates to certain aspects of Buddhist doctrine is something that I deal with extensively in my dissertation.

[45] *spyi so* is generally understood to be the monastic main office where practical

The above shows that attitudes with regard to reallocating monastic goods changed over time. Again, the reason may be sought in the unchecked population growth at Drepung monastery during the later half of the seventeenth century. A larger number of inhabitants simply calls for a different type of management. In any case, all of the above examples suggest that the large numbers of inmates at the monastery were, to a certain extent, counterbalanced by an abundance of benefactors and goods. The Fifth Dalai Lama even sets lower and upper limits for those benefactors in terms of the extent of offering to the monastic community.[47] The minimum is paying for soup and tea served six times a day for thirteen days, the maximum is to do the same for twenty three days (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 310).

The monastic guidelines show that it was not just the monastery that flourished under the attention of sponsors, but also certain areas were perceived to be rather wealthy:

> These days, there is a vast boundless income one can get when one, for example goes to faraway lands like Mongolia and Khams to collect offerings. As for those monks who were sent [here] by their home monasteries (*gzhis dgon*) as students, because they are sent shares (*skal ba*), they will need to take care of their own contribution (*sham thabs khral*)[48] by means of doing rituals and the like.[49]

The above seems to suggest at least two things. First of all, Mongolia and Kham were seen as places that were wealthy and where it was easy

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matters were handled. It can also be a title, and the financial officers at Sera were so called. However, it appears to be that here the term speaks of the entire estate of Drepung monastery.

[46] "*dge 'dun tshor bgod rin mi chog pa'i 'gyed kyi rigs tshal par btang tshe nor mi nyan du 'gro bas bgod pa las spyi pa'i phyag mdzod du bzhag na spyi sor phan slebs che ba 'jog*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 313). Instead of *'gyed*, *'Bras spungs bca' yig* 3 reads *za byed*: food.

[47] This may be a specific type of offering: the person who requests to do this is called *'gyed tshar gtong mi*. I have not been able to assess the exact meaning of this phrase.

[48] This phrase appears to suggest that the branch monasteries had to pay the main monastery a certain amount for letting their monks study there. A different use of the phrase is noted in Davidson (2005: 394, n. 68). Here it appears that it refers to the flow of money or contributions from subsidiary groups to the main temples in the 11th century.

[49] "*deng sang khams sog gis mtshon yul thag ring la 'bul sdud du song ba sogs la'ang skal ba len pa'i rgya che mu med yod 'dug cing/ gzhis dgon pa'i rigs nas grwa pa tshor bslab gnyer lta bur song ba la skal ba gtong ba ni tshul sgrub mchod kyis mtshon so so'i sham thabs khral sgrub dgos pa'i rgyu mtshan yin 'dug*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 304).

to collect donations. Some monks may have been abusing the wealth and the locals' willingness to give. Elsewhere in the text, the Dalai Lama forbids monks to go out on unofficial trips to these areas to collect "alms". This is in fact a recurrent issue that gets addressed in other monastic guidelines. Secondly, the above citation indicates that monks coming from elsewhere were "sponsored" by their home monastery, and thus were not reliant upon the allowances (*phogs*) handed out by the government. It appears then that these monks, who were not financially dependent on Drepung, formed a potential threat to the reputation of the monastery, because the section cited above is immediately followed by this statement:

> Monks like this have no such scruples (*srol med*) and their characters and the example [they set] cannot be hidden. Because even when benefactors do service [to them] it may be harmful, they should not be sent out [to benefactors].[50]

As alluded to above, many monastic guidelines express concerns about monks going out and pressuring lay-people into giving donations, in particular when the sole beneficiary was the individual monk and not the monastic institution. This is in tension with the Vinayic ideal of the monk begging for alms, even though it seems as though this particular practice, so widespread in Theravāda countries, has never been common in Tibet. Although the points on which monastic guidelines and Vinaya rules potentially clash are almost never remarked upon in *bca' yig*, the Great Fifth makes something of an exception here:

> Because going on an alms-round in Tibet proper, during for example the autumn, is in accordance with the intent of the Vinaya, it does not need to be stopped. Except for people who collect offerings for the general good (*spyi don*) in China, Mongolia, and Khams, etc., one is not to go to ask for donations, on one's own accord, without it being an exception [on behalf of] the officials and the general good.[51]

In the above statement the author sees the possible conflict, but somehow finds a way around it by using the Vinayic/sūtric term *bsod snyoms brgyag pa*, this is allowed. However, he limits the practice to Tibet and

[50] "*grwa pa 'di tshor 'de 'dra'i srol med gshis dpe mi khebs shing/ sbyin bdag rnams kyis zhabs tog byed pa la'ang gnod 'dug pas gtong sa med*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 304).

[51] "*ston ka sogs bod rang du bsod snyoms brgyag pa ni 'dul ba'i ba'i dgongs pa dang yang mthun pas dgag mi dgos shing/ rgya sog khams sogs la grwa pa grwa tshang spyi don gyi slong mo byed mi ma gtogs las sne dang spyi don dmigs bsal med par kha mthun sdebs slong mo brgyag par mi 'gro*" (*ibid.*: 313).

employs a more pejorative term for the forbidden practice of collecting donations elsewhere, namely *slong mo byed pa*, which can simply be translated as "to beg". Interestingly, this section was cited almost *verbatim* by the Seventh Dalai Lama bsKal bzang rgya mtsho (1708–1757) in a set of monastic guidelines for Sera monastery (1737).[52] In this text, he merely seems to have adapted the language somewhat, conspicuously leaving out Kham as a place one cannot go to collect donations.[53] This may have to do with the changed perception of what was seen to be "*Bod*". In the mind of the Great Fifth, Kham perhaps did not belong to *Bod*, but some fifty years later it may have done in the opinion of his incarnation, the Seventh.

Above, I referred to the allowances, which were handed out by the monastic office (*spyi so*). The Fifth stipulates who is entitled to this "salary" and the order in which people are to receive it:

> When the allowances of the monastic main office are given out, then liaising with a government representative (*gzhung gi ngo tshab*), one gives, according to the sealed document with allowances (*phogs yig*), first to the colleges and their studying monks (*chos grwa ba*), secondly to the residents who are not affiliated (*ldebs 'byar med pa'i gzhi ba*) and those from dGe 'phel[54] and dNgul chu chos rdzong,[55] thirdly, to the rest of the crowd who are in one way or the other affiliated, consisting of the riffraff (*'bags rengs*) such as the kitchen aids. Those who have not gone through three debate classes (*chos grwa*), those who now study medicine and astrology (*gso dpyad rtsis*), and the resident servants of the *dbon chos mdzad*[56] are not taken up in the allowances-ledger (*phogs deb*) of the monastic main office.[57]

[52] A partial, but conspicuously selective translation of this text can be found in Michael (1982: 183–88).

[53] "*bod rang du bsod snyoms byed pa 'dul ba'i dgongs pa dang mthun pas dgag bya mi dgos 'dra yang/ rgya sog gi yul khams sogs la spyi don gyi 'bul sdud slong mo byed mi ma gtogs/ spyi don med par kha mthun gyis slong mo mi byed*" (rGyal mchog bdun pa chen po 1737: 111).

[54] This is likely to be dGe 'phel hermitage (*ri khrod*), which is situated in the mountains above Drepung monastery.

[55] Originally an early *bka' 'dams* monastery in Tsang.

[56] The *Tshig mdzod* explains this as "*sngar gdan sa khag gi tshogs chen chos mdzad*": a *chos mdzad* of the big assembly at the monastic seats of the old days (*Tshig mdzod*: 1949). Not much is known of the exact nature of the *chos mdzad*. Cabezón notes that they were usually from aristocratic or wealthy families and that their families often donated a large sum to the monastery as monks, which would buy them a special status (Cabezón 1997: 348).

[57] "*spyi so'i phogs rgyag dus gzhung gi ngo tshab dang sbrel nas phogs yig dam 'byar gyi nang bzhin ang ki dang por chos grwa ba sogs grwa tshang khag gnyis par*

This is an interesting account of who, according to the author, is and who is not deserving of a monastic stipend. It perhaps comes as a surprise that the lower stratum of inhabitants is included among the beneficiaries while the students of medicine are not. The allowances probably functioned to support those who were the most disadvantaged, who did not have the opportunity to do some business on the side. People who practised astrology, medicine, or served an aristocratic monk already received an income.

Bribes and Corruption

The monastic economy appears to have been in a healthy state, a situation that attracted both serious monks and opportunists to Drepung. It therefore comes as no surprise that bribery became a problem at Drepung. Corruption is a recurrent theme in many monastic guidelines. It appears that the Fifth Dalai Lama was particularly concerned with corruption in the context of education. He laments that the level of education had gone down in comparison to previous times, during which people were much more motivated to study (*ibid.*: 307). It appeared that certain monks were even willing to pay to get a degree:

> It is well known that when taking the *gling bsre* [exam],[58] one would be let off the hook without having one's level of education examined, had the disciplinarian received a present (*rngan pa*).[59]

The dividing line between what constitutes as a bribe rather than an obligatory gift is of course fluid. Even in today's spoken Tibetan the word *rngan pa* is used for both. Here it is clear that as the aim of this gift is to gain something that one otherwise would not have deserved, *rngan pa* can surely be thought of as equal to our concept of bribe, although the western connotation with unlawfulness would be stretching it too far.

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gzhan gyi ldebs 'byar med pa'i gzhi ba dang dge 'phel dang dngul chu chos rdzong pa sogs/ gsum par thab g.yog sogs 'bags rengs skor bab 'brel gang yod rnams la rgyag chos grwa la gsum tsam yang ma 'grim pa'i phyogs mi gso dpyad rtsis sogs bslab mkhan dang dbon chos mdzad lta bu'i g.yog gzhi bar bsnyed pa'i phogs deb tu mi skyel zhing" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 306–307).

[58] This is one of the lower level *geshe* degrees at Drepung (Tarab Tulku 2000: 17–18).

[59] "*gling bsre gtod* [*sic*?: *gtong*] *skabs dge skos kyi rngan pa blangs nas yon tan che chung la mi blta bar gtong ba yongs su bsrgags shing*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 308).

Our author further notes that up until the time of writing this practice had been going on with impunity, but that henceforth this degree should only be given to someone who has studied all the main topics, including *Madhyamaka*, *Prajñāpāramitā* and the four topics that are singled out (*zur bkol*), and who knows how to interpret, and has received the transmissions of, the *Pramāṇavarttika*. This degree, the Fifth Dalai Lama remarks, "should not be given to people who bribe (*stod khrab pa*),[60] because it will harm the continuation of the teachings".[61] He then names what gifts can be given by the recipient of the degree, such as tea and soup to the monks of the college, for the two disciplinarians evening tea with molasses (*dgongs* [*sic*: *dgong*] *ja bu ram*) and if there happened to be a party (*ston mo*) one could hand out some coins (*dngul srang*) (*ibid.*: 309). It seems that limiting the quantity of gifts that the "graduate" can give served two purposes in this context. First of all, if the presents to the other monks were insignificant, they could not be perceived as bribes, and secondly, the gifts that a *geshe* (*dge bshes*) to be was expected to give often financially crippled the giver, so limiting the expenditure would allow the poorer monks to become a *geshe*. Even recently, this was an issue on which new rules had to be made at the Three Seats in India. Geshe Gedün Lodrö gives a list with the amounts of food the new *geshe* had to pay for (Lodrö 1974: 282). All in all, it must have been an expensive affair.

Corruption did not just occur in the context of degrees. The Drepung monastic guidelines report that on occasions there had been:

> some greedy teachers (*dge rgan ham pa can*), like those who would go to Lhasa on official business (*don gcod*), not hiding the fact that they are of the Gelug school (*dge ba pa*), but who would pretend that what they got was only for their college. They would put a seal on the goods and their own living quarters would be full of them. [Since then] those things have turned up and it is obvious that they should wholly go to the big colleges. These things are a total embarrassment, and should thus not be carried out.[62]

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60 I have not come across this expression anywhere else, so the translation is conjectural.

61 "*de la 'dzem bag kyang cher mi byed pa zhig sngar nas da lta'i bar 'dug kyang/ dbu phar gnyis po'i thal phreng spyi don zur bkol bzhi cha tshang song ba/ rnam 'grel gyi rigs lung phogs pa rnams brda lan 'byor nges shes pa ma gtogs stod khrab pa'i rigs la slad nas gtad na bstan rgyun la gnod pas mi sprod cing*" (*ibid.*: 308–309).

62 "*dge ba par bkab mi byed par lha sar don gcod la yong ba lta bur dge rgan ham pa can la las khams tshan thob pa tsam rtags su bkod nas chas pa la rgya sdom byed cing/ gnas tshang du 'tshangs nas dngos po 'don pa sogs byung 'phros 'dug pa grwa*

Even though the Dalai Lama had previously written a set of guidelines on how to behave during the Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*) in 1675 (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1675), he also addresses the issue of corruption during the festival in the Drepung guidelines. He finds it particularly important for Drepung monks to behave correctly because Drepung is the *de facto* ruler of the city at that time. The author points out that the number of participating monks has grown, and that it will grow even more if monks' duties would stay as relaxed as they were before. The biggest problem that the Great Fifth sees is that monks in an official position, such as that of disciplinarian or disciplinarian's assistant (*dge g.yog*), would abuse their office. This would be done by not properly dividing the donations, by forcing other monks to hand theirs over, and by settling old grudges.

The position of disciplinarian's assistant must have been a profitable one, because the Dalai Lama notes that the disciplinarians were in a habit of receiving bribes that would influence their choice of assistant.[63] The appointed assistants then would go on to behave with impunity, carrying with them short sticks that they could hide under their armpits, which they used to force other monks to give up the donations they received (*ibid.*).[64] The author goes on to forbid the disciplinarians from accepting bribes and soliciting visitors for alms (*'grul pa sogs la slong mo*) and prohibits their assistants from snatching goods away from others (*dngos chas 'phrog pa*) (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 315–16). This rogue behaviour that apparently was rife when monks from the Three Seats and beyond flooded Lhasa was not just a 17th century phenomenon. Charles Bell reports that, some 250 years later, during the Great Prayer Festival the Drepung monks would not just take over power in the city but that they would also loot, causing the wealthier people to flee the city along with their belongings (Bell 1998 [1946]: 58).

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sa chen po rnams rlabs kyis 'gro dgos gshis/ de rigs zhabs 'dren kho na yin 'dug pas byed sa med" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 313–14).

63 "*dge skos kyis dge g.yog lag nas rngan par bltas pa'i bsko lugs byas pa dang*" (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 315).

64 This *bca' yig*, as do all others I have come across so far, is silent about the "rogue" or *ldob ldob* monks, which were said to have had their own societies. The description of these unscrupulous disciplinarian's assistants here somehow reminds one of them.

THE EXTENT OF AUTHORITY

Throughout this article, the Fifth Dalai Lama has been presented as the single author of this text. It is certainly true that it is more than highly likely, judging by the idiosyncrasies in the style of writing and choice of words, that he wrote the Drepung guidelines. However, the details concerning the contemporary goings on at Drepung are very intricate and it is unlikely that the Dalai Lama was personally aware of most of them. These monastic guidelines—and, for that matter, most monastic guidelines written by an author "from the outside"—have only come to be on the basis of careful communication with other highly placed and qualified Drepung monks. The Fifth names them all and meticulously describes the process of meeting with representatives from all the colleges and specifies that he sent out delegates to consult with those who were ill or in retreat about the new guidelines.[65] He also gives the main reasons why he was requested to write new rules, namely that the original guidelines written by the founder 'Jam dbyangs chos rje had become lost, that the set that had been written later on was found to be too intricate by some and too long by others and that generally speaking, of late the behaviour of certain colleges had deteriorated gradually (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 322).

Even though, this text can be seen as a document that shows us the vision the Great Fifth had for Drepung, it does not mean that it was entirely his vision alone. He did not lay down the law like some theocratic despot, but wrote the work in consultation with many other experts and as well as other documents. The Dalai Lama did however hold the view that rules needed to be enforced, and that they could only be enforced by someone in religious authority, for otherwise the new rules would remain ignored.[66] For the monks of the powerful Drepung monastery, the only author whose law they would be prepared to accept would be the person with the highest authority in the whole of Tibet, the Great Fifth.

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[65] The same procedure for compiling a new set of monastic guidelines is still followed at the monastic institutions in Tibet and in exile.

[66] The language is rather cryptic here: "*bgyis pa rnams kyang tshul bzhin ma byung tshe de lam du bzhag na ma mthus pas rim 'gyangs su lus pa yin rung sprul pa'i chos skyong chen po nas rta mdzos mtha' brten pa'i bkag cha'i bcad brdar dang*" (*ibid.*: 323).

Guidelines for Tibetan Social History

The text under discussion here, taken at face value, appears to be elitist, and therefore not to fit the subject matter of this volume, which deals with "historical blind spots" and "views from below". This is because it was written by someone who had the highest authority at that time in Tibet. The topic of the text is a monastery that was wealthy and important. Furthermore, Drepung belongs to the Gelug school, a school that dominates the Western language research of Tibet's cultural, political, religious, and social history, particularly where Buddhist monasticism is involved. This emphasis has, to a great extent, to do with our sources: there is simply more material written by Gelug masters around, and perhaps more Gelug teachers willing to explain the intricacies of the Tibetan texts. On the other hand, the fact that the Gelug school was so intimately involved in politics also makes it absolutely essential to understand Tibetan history through a wider lens. Thus, even though this set of monastic guidelines gives a perspective viewed from above, it most definitely grants us a view on what was below. In other words, even though social history is generally thought of as acting against "great man history", there is no reason why a work written by a great man cannot form the basis for a social historical investigation. In this respect, it is perhaps surprising that a text on the wild monastic elephant that is the enormous Drepung monastery has been able to escape the historian's net. I hope I have made clear that the work contains valuable material for the study of Tibet's social history.

The set of monastic guidelines that I have treated here is one single source that informs us about the social historical context of monastic life and beyond. This text represents just one case study that highlights certain issues to do with the more mundane aspects of Tibetan monastic life, such as overpopulation, immigration, monastic economy and corruption. The limitations of closely reading just one text should be obvious, and here we are restricted to Drepung monastery in the year 1682. However, there are many more of these types of texts, which almost all contain similar information on the social position of monasteries in pre-modern Tibet, spanning a number of centuries.[67] These texts, most of which have not been studied in an academic context, address contemporary issues and tackle various monastic problems

[67] So far, I have collected close to two hundred *bca' yig* texts, which I am sure is just the tip of the iceberg. I am in the process of developing a database that will make the texts more accessible.

thereby permitting us a candid view of the goings on at monastic institutions. By taking the monastic guidelines as a genre, and by studying these texts in a way that is both synchronic and diachronic, one will be able to see larger patterns emerge. Some of these patterns will have to do with the level of restrictions to the monastery: when the restrictions for becoming a monk imposed by a monastery were strict, it is more likely for it to have had a high population at that time; the more concern a set of monastic guidelines shows to its benefactors and its immediate surroundings, the more likely it is for the monastery to have been economically highly dependent on the neighbouring lay-population. When one then looks at the *longue durée* by means of these documents, one will be able to see the emergence of certain trends that shed light first of all on the changing position of the monastic communities, but second of all also on their relations and interactions with the lay communities and thereby on Tibetan society as a whole.

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HOW SHOULD WE DEFINE SOCIAL STATUS? THE STUDY OF "INTERMEDIATE GROUPS" IN CENTRAL TIBET (1895–1959)*

ALICE TRAVERS

> Constructing a theory of social space presupposes a series of breaks with Marxist theory. First, a break with the tendency to privilege substances—here, the real groups, whose number, limits, members, etc., one claims to define—at the expense of relationships; and with the intellectualist illusion that leads one to consider the theoretical class, constructed by the sociologist, as a real class, an effectively mobilised group. Secondly, there has to be a break with the economism that leads one to reduce the social field, a multi-dimensional space, solely to the economic field, to the relations of economic production, which are thus constituted as co-ordinates of social position. Finally, there has to be a break with the objectivism that goes hand-in-hand with intellectualism, and that leads one to ignore the symbolic struggles of which the different fields are the site, where what is at stake is the very representation of the social world and, in particular, the hierarchy within each of the fields and among the different fields.
>
> (Bourdieu 1985 [1984]: 723)

INTRODUCTION: A MISSING SOCIAL STRATUM, INTERMEDIATE ELITES IN CENTRAL TIBET?

The observation of the social world has produced different representations and theories of its organisation. One of them is social stratification, usually defined as a social, economic and political organisation scheme in social categories or groups, called strata, which display homogeneity, and are distinct and hierarchised. Tibetan society conceives itself in terms of hereditary social divisions called *rigs*, which are hierarchically organised and have been mostly translated by the term "social strata". These strata are known to be clearly delimited at the top, for the aristocracy (*sku drag*), and at the bottom, for the "infe-

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rior" or so-called "impure strata" (*smad rigs*), but are more flexible in the middle. How social differentiation works in the middle, in terms of hereditary divisions (*rigs*), status (*gras*) or rank (*rim pa*) is a subject that has received little attention from researchers.[1]

The stratification of Central Tibetan society in the first half of the 20th century tends to be presented as a never-changing, almost immanent social order,[2] be it by Tibetans themselves, or by Western observers who have taken these representations for granted. According to Stein, for example, there were "social classes—the common people and the nobility, for the older Tibet, and the people, the nobility and the clergy from the 9th century onwards" (Stein 1972: 92). Moreover, he curiously denies the existence of an intermediate group, while nevertheless perceiving it at the same time: "There is no 'middle' class [in the French version, Stein wrote "Point de bourgeoisie]"[3]—except for a few rich merchants from better-off plebeian families, especially in modern Tibet, and stewards, who are remarkably well informed" (*ibid.*).

For the first half of 20th-century Central Tibet, we find almost no studies of the intermediate groups, between traditional elites such as aristocrats and high lamas on the one hand and the farmers and nomads on the other, even though they seem to become more numerous with the modernisation of Tibet and the development of trade, especially in cities like Lhasa.[4] Why should actors and observers be blind to a whole social group? By "social group", I mean an ensemble of people who share norms, values, lifestyle, and who have important relationships among themselves. Why should observers see that there are people who do not fit the traditional presentation of social order, but do not need to give them a name or think that they deserve attention?

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[1] For a study of hereditary divisions in contemporary Tibetan society, see Fjeld 2005.

[2] M. Kapstein mentions this perception of an immutable class system: "the precise history of the emergence of the Central Tibetan class system has been poorly studied to date, and though the system was imbued with an aura of inalterability it is not at all clear that, at the time of its breakup in the 1950's and 1960's, it was more than two or three centuries old" (Kapstein 2006: 180).

[3] One has to note that the French phrase "classes moyennes" differs in meaning from its English equivalent "middle class": the latter encompasses only what is regarded as the higher middle strata or the bourgeoisie in France (Chauvel 2013).

[4] The reality of the development of trade during the first half of the 20th century and its impact on the social structure needs further exploration.

It seems to me that the lack of attention to the intermediate social group in Tibetan social studies can be explained by several factors. First, because there has been a tendency to impose a medieval reading on Tibetan society and history.[5] This interpretation stresses the binary opposition between farmers and landlords and tends to obliterate nuances and groups who are external to this opposition. This tendency has also been reinforced by a dominant Marxist interpretation of Tibetan history since the 1950s, among Western observers and in communist China, which stresses the class struggle, and produces an artificially binary representation of society in antagonistic classes. Last but not least, there is an obvious lack of urban social history regarding Tibet, though as we shall see, not all these intermediate strata lived in cities.[6]

The Tibetan statutory system and the preceding description of Tibetan society do not give an accurate account of the reality and complexity of Tibetan society in terms of social status in the first half of the 20th century. It seems crucial to understand how social order worked and how professional groups and social status were intertwined in the intermediate social groups. In this paper, I would like to take a very preliminary step in this direction by discussing the existence of an intermediate social group, its common features and its name, and by confronting these issues with a very concrete example of "intermediate social status" expressed by Tibetans during the period.

The sources used to investigate the subject are mainly autobiographies in Tibetan, published in India and China, and fifteen interviews with Tibetans in Dharamsala and Lhasa, conducted during the summer of 2012.

First, I will tackle methodological considerations on the study of an "intermediate group" in Tibet; in the second part, I will describe and analyse the status of "ordinary people" (*dkyus ma*), as the term was applied in the private school of Nang rong shar in the first half of 20th

[5] See for instance the conclusive part of Stein 1973 [1962].

[6] There have been only very few works on Tibetan urban social history. We may cite the study of Veronika Ronge on handicrafts before 1959 (Ronge 1978) and, more recently, Françoise Robin's study of the *par pa'i skyid sdug*, the printers' association in Lhasa (Robin 2010). Urban social history is useful inasmuch as it allows us to go beyond the opposition between landowners and agrarian/nomadic taxpayers, and hence to examine groups who were neither farmers nor pastoralists, and take into account floating populations. It is a particularly good field of observation for the intermediate strata, as in the case of the social history of other cultural areas such as Japan (Carré 2011).

century Lhasa; lastly, I will come back to the broader question of the social group and social status, and to what is most relevant in their definition, if one investigates the existence of intermediate strata in Tibet.

1. Methodological considerations for the study of "intermediate groups": etic versus emic point of view

1.1. Composition of the intermediate strata: a number of specific professional activities

In a previous study conducted on the aristocracy of Central Tibet (Travers 2009), I drew attention to an ensemble of commoners at its fringes, who enjoyed close relations with the nobility, especially with the lower ranking families (*sger pa*), to the point that they not infrequently married into the aristocracy and/or were ennobled. The hypothesis of a certain unity in this group of elite commoners started to take shape, although its members came from different subgroups, either from local agricultural and nomadic areas or from the capital of Lhasa. Among them were rich farmers (*zhing pa*) holding large non-hereditary estates or extensive lands with numerous servants (*g.yog po*), and often charged with local representative functions or tax collecting responsibilities;[7] traders from East and Central Tibet; individuals serving as secretaries-cum-administrators (*las drung*) in district headquarters (*rdzong*); secretaries (*drung yig*) and managers-cum-secretaries (*gnyer drung*) of low rank in the central government's offices, below the main officials' ranking system, and without the status of government official (*gzhung zhab*); treasurers (*phyag mdzod*) and managers (*gnyer pa*) of aristocratic families or *bla brang*; non-commissioned army officers;[8] and sometimes families of famous tantric practitioners (*sngags pa*) (Travers 2008).

The life stories and family genealogies which could be drawn from biographies and recent interviews confirmed that all these small groups were linked to each other in specific ways, forming an identifiable

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[7] These included the *'tsho dpon* (tax collectors), *gtso drag, gtso dpon, she dpon* (for nomad areas), *brgya dpon, bcu dpon* and *lding dpon* (in a civil, non-military sense). See the description of some of these functions in Blo bzang bkra shis (ed.) 2007 and Dhingri Ngawang 2011: 3.

[8] Interview n°9.

social network, which made it possible to identify a kind of middle stratum or intermediate elite that has been marginalised in social studies of Tibet.

1.2. Scarcity of mention in secondary literature

Three authors in particular have been sensitive to social differentiation among the common people. The first to have stressed the existence of such an intermediate group was Charles Bell, but he saw it as a purely mercantile group: "Tibetan society falls mainly into two classes; the landed gentry on the one side, the peasantry and shepherds on the other. The trading community stand between the two, forming a middle class with middle-class aims, but they have so far little power. There is no strong middle class" (Bell 1992 [1928]: 109).

Then, without naming it, Hugh Richardson also refers to such an intermediate group, in a very short note in *Tibet and its history*, when he writes, while describing the social origins of army officers: "What might be described as the equivalent of warrant officers were drawn from the same stratum of society as stewards of estates or by promotion of able ordinary soldiers" (Richardson 1962: 17).

But it was Melvyn Goldstein who first took into account the diversity of this group and chose to label it a "middle class" and then a "middle stratum". In the first volume of his history, published in 1989, he makes only one mention of the existence of a middle class when he states: "Most commonly, monk officials were either the sons of the Lhasa middle class or members of the families of existing monk officials [*shag tshang*]" (Goldstein 1993 [1989]: 8). We find a more elaborate description in his second volume on Tibetan history, published in 2007, in a small digression, when he describes the creation of the Tibetan People's Association (*Mi dmangs tshogs 'du*) in 1956, pointing to the fact that its founders were not exactly common folk:

> They were, to be sure, of the people in the sense that they did not belong to the aristocratic and monk official government elite, but they were also not proletarian folk in the communist sense. Tibet in 1951 had no well-defined hierarchy of social strata. At the apex of the social hierarchy was an elite upper stratum consisting of several hundred aristocratic government officials (and their families) and an equal number of monk government officials (and their households). There were also a few—less than a score—major incarnate lamas with vast property in Lhasa and their own monasteries in Lhasa, for example, Kundeling, Tshecholing, and

> Tshomöling. Together, this elite category probably numbered no more than a few thousand people. [...] Beneath them almost all of the remainder of the population hereditarily belonged to estates owned by aristocratic and monastic lords or by the government itself. And while there were significant differences within this vast social category—for example, some had land and others did not—they all shared the characteristic that they were hereditarily bound to their lord and could not change that status unilaterally.
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> Between the elite and the 'masses' was a numerically small category sometimes referred to in Tibetan as 'those in the middle' (*badzalaga; bar tsa lag ga*). This middle stratum was primarily made up of administrators and managers who worked privately for the elite—for monasteries, for the labrang of incarnate lamas, for aristocratic families, and even sometimes for government offices. The vast majority of these administrators and managers were worldly monks or ex-monks who had learned writing and managing skills while living as monks. [...]
>
> The job market for such manager-administrators was excellent, because the elite government officials disliked leaving Lhasa to collect taxes or loans or to conduct other trading activities, and because there was no general education system to produce large numbers of other lay people with equivalent skills. Many of these manager types, therefore, came to work for the elite and were well-connected with powerful figures in society, particularly among the monk official segment. Consequently, among the nonelite in Lhasa, there was a small stratum of individuals who were especially conscious of government activities and personages and had important personal relationship with the elite. (Goldstein 2007: 319–21)

We see that Goldstein's definition of a Tibetan middle class in still centred on the monk officials. Yet, in a small footnote linked to this passage, Goldstein extends the group to certain lay categories:

> In addition to these *badzalaga* monks and ex-monks, in the urban setting the middle stratum also included a small category of laymen who had learned writing in one or the three or four small private schools in Lhasa. These individuals were typically the children of the above mentioned ex-monk managers, or the relatives of government monk officials, or the sons of successful craftsmen and clerks in Lhasa. Some were even the sons of rich suburban village families. This stratum also included a small group of clerks working in government offices, small shopkeepers, large and small traders, and non-commissioned officers in the Tibetan army and police. (*ibid.*: 321)

1.3. Education and endogamy as criteria for this social group's existence

The common features to be found among these different sub-groups were not only their frequent interaction (professional or matrimonial) with the aristocracy, as I had already established: the principal common characteristic was above all the fact that very often, some children of these families were well educated, having been trained since their childhood by private teachers or in private and government schools, which confirms what Goldstein points out in the footnote cited above. The second main feature is the fact that they also preferred to marry among themselves. Two examples will serve by way of illustration.

The first is that of sPel gong Phur bu dbang rgyal. He came from a *mi ser* family living on the sPel gong estate, which belonged to the *yab gzhis* sTag tsher house (of the 14th Dalai-lama) near rGyal rtse. He was a very good student at his village school, and the father of the 14th Dalai Lama recommended him when he was around twenty-five years old to the Pha lha noble house. They took him as their treasurer and he even became their senior treasurer (*phyag mdzod rgan pa*). He received an estate called sPel snang, that he was entitled to pass on to his family and could keep the products of the estate while paying a tax to the Pha lha family. At the time, he was renting a three-storey house in Lhasa, near the house of Pha lha family, again called sPel gong, in which he started a private school with around 170 children. He had nine children: among them three were married after 1950 and three were nuns. Among the three who married before major changes in the society occurred, two were married to traders' families (one being *mi ser* of the Pha lha family and hence called Pha lha tshong khang, the other trader house being called Kutri tshong khang and having a house and shop on the *bar 'khor*). The third child, a daughter, married an elderly monk official who had disrobed and had become a lay official, holding a low rank in the Ganden Podrang administration.[9]

The second example is the treasurer of the sNar skyid noble house. When sNar skyid was posted as district governor (*rdzong dpon*) in Kunam district, the treasurer, who stayed with him, arranged for the wedding of his son to the daughter of a local nomad headman (*she*

[9] Interview n°2 and sPel gong Blo bzang yon tan 2007.

dpon). When the headman later brought a legal case against the district governor for mistreatment of the local people, the governor and his treasurer forced the two young people to divorce. The headman's daughter subsequently married a powerful merchant of rTse thang. Then, after the latter passed away, she married a well-known *sngags pa*, while the treasurer's son, her ex-husband, became a manager (*gnyer pa*) in the sNar skyid noble house in Lhasa.[10]

Now, although this social intermediate group certainly displays a certain unity, I found nobody either among old Tibetans from Central Tibet now exiled in Dharamsala or old Tibetans in Lhasa who had ever heard of this word *bar tsa lag ga*.[11] Some of them even denied the existence of such a social group with the unity that the concept implies, insisting on the fact that social status would depend on individual considerations.[12] Only one informant explained that it was a pure *lha sa skad* term and that the idea of "intermediary [social] space" (*bar ma*) could be used in Lhasa to refer only to merchants, but not to rich farmers or to scholars.

The next step, then, is to examine if there is really no conception of an intermediate elite in Tibetan representations of society during the first half of the 20th century. Is there any trace of such a group from the emic point of view?

2. The specific status of "ordinary people" (*dkyus ma gras*) in the private school of Nang rong shar

Since education seemed to have been a common pillar of this social group identity, I started investigating the system of private and government schools in Lhasa and in Central Tibet. There were more than twenty private schools in the capital of Lhasa, with the largest numbering up to 300 students. Most future government officials went to Tar khang School, and many others to Nang rong shar, which was one of those biggest schools, and is known for having enrolled the children of most traders.[13] The term *dkyus ma*, which means "ordinary", was used in general to designate all commoners, in opposition to aristocrats, but

[10] Interview n°3.
[11] Interview n°12.
[12] Interview n°1 and 2.
[13] Interview n°7.

not in the Nang rong shar School, where it took on a particular meaning.[14]

2.1. The three name lists of Nang rong shar School

In several passages of his autobiography, published in 2009 by the Amye Machen Institute in Dharamsala, Nor bu chos 'phel describes the social origins of the students in the Nang rong shar School. We learn that the students were children from people of "high, middle or ordinary status: children from the higher social strata of the government's official, and also from merchants' families, etc." The author underlines that "among the children who graduated from this school, there were many employees of high, middle and small (rank) who were to enter the service of the government, and treasurers and managers of the landowners/aristocrats, and also a few who were appointed as treasurers and managers of different monastic households (*bla brang*). And besides, there were traders who, thanks to their knowledge, made a living through all kinds of business" (Khri zhabs nor bu chos 'phel 2009: 52).

He then explains the organisation of the schooling and the registration process when one new student entered the school and had his name put on a list:

> There were three sorts of name lists for the school: the list of landowners/aristocrats, the list of 'ordinary people', and the list of 'lower people'. First, in the list of aristocrats [*sger gzhung*] were registered the children of government's officials, in the list of ordinary people [*dkyus gzhung*] were registered the children of merchants, etc., and in the list of 'lower people' [*shod bag*] were registered the children of people having servant's rank.[15] (*ibid.*: 54)

It was possible to investigate this further by interviewing five Tibetans who had studied in this school and had in certain cases served as cap-

[14] Interview n°12. The world *dkyus ma* takes on different meanings according to the context in Tibetan: when speaking only of the government officials, *drung 'khor dkyus ma* designates the lower ranking officials of the 7th rank.

[15] "*Slob grwa'i ming gzhung la khag gsum yod/ sger gzhung/ dkyus gzhung/ shod bag bcas yin/ dang po sger gzhung nang gzhung zhabs khag gi a war rnams dang/ dkyus gzhung nang tshong rigs sogs kyi phru gu'i ming/ shod bag nang zhabs gras sogs kyi ming bcas bkod yod*".

tain (*rgan bdag*) at different levels.[16] Nor bu chos 'phel, the author of the book, states that there were delimited spaces inside the school for the students of these three categories, although the schooling itself was the same. The children of the aristocracy studied on the top floor, whereas the *dkyus ma* and the servants' children each sat separately on one side of the ground floor. The status difference was also expressed in the terms of address used: they would use "*sras*" before the family name for children of the aristocracy, "*a wa*" for children of *dkyus ma* and treasurers, etc., and only the family name for children of servants or petty merchants.[17]

According to several informants who also studied in Nang rong shar,[18] the *dkyus ma* list or the status of ordinary people (*dkyus ma gras*) encompassed mainly traders, but also some rich farmers who were *gzhung rgyug*, sons of treasurers, managers and caretakers working for the government but without the rank of government official, and the higher status craftsmen (*lag shes pa*) (the rest being in the *shod pa* list).[19] There were exceptions, such as the son of a *zhing pa* family that held estates, and where a well-known lama had been born, who was registered among the *sger gzhung*.

It is clear that there was a Tibetan concept of a social group occupying the middle of the Central Tibetan social ladder, the "ordinary rank" (*dkyus gras*). It has to be underlined that this division in different lists according to one's social status was used in Nang rong shar School, but one cannot say with certainty if it was used in other schools. It seems that in some other schools like Dar po gling (also named Skyid ras), social differentiation would be expressed only in the terms of address.[20]

Let us now examine the stated logic behind the aggregation of the *dkyus ma* group at Nang rong shar School.

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16 Interviews n°4, 6, 7, 12, 13.
17 Interview n°4.
18 Interviews n°7, 12, 13.
19 Interview n°12.
20 Interview n°3.

2.2. Specificity of the *dkyus ma* subgroup: freedom versus servitude, theory and practice

Apart from the fact that all these families sent their children to school to acquire an education, a common feature shared by the *shod pa* group (servants), what was the idea behind the creation of such a statutory list? An informant identified the following common points: they could all provide food and shelter for themselves and lived autonomously from the economic point of view; they were neither servants nor masters. All those who had no land and were not working for someone, but paid the so-called "human lease" fee (*mi bogs*) were considered independent.[21] Several informants insist that what defines a "*dkyus ma*" or an ordinary person is the fact that he is not serving anybody, nor being served by anyone, has no master and no servant.[22] So the status of *dkyus ma* when used alone would be defined by the absence of a service relationship. And such a view applied perfectly to the big traders' families from eastern Tibet, outside the Ganden Podrang regime, which constituted a good part of students in this group.

But it seems that there are many exceptions to this first definition even in the *dkyus ma* group: first, only merchants from eastern Tibet outside the boundary of the Ganden Podrang territory were technically freemen in Central Tibet. All other merchants living in Central Tibet and working in Lhasa were *mi ser* with *mi bogs* ("human lease") status (Goldstein 1971). It appears then that those merchants who had to pay a nominal fee to their monastic or aristocratic landlord, or to the Agricultural Office (So nam las khung), or to other institutions, were considered freemen in practice by others, as well as by themselves, as several interviews show.

Let us take one example of a family of traders whose son used to attend the Nang rong shar School. This family was called Tshong pa gsar pa and had a shop on the *bar 'khor*. The parents had come from sMar khams to set up their business in Lhasa, they had around eighty horses and were engaged in commercial trade between India and China. They paid the *mi bogs* fee to a local *bla brang* near dMar khams, to which they were officially attached as *mi ser*. They had five sons whom they all made monks, and who also studied at Nang rong shar. They

[21] Interview n°7.

[22] Interview n°3.

took a *mag pa* for their only daughter. This *mag pa* was a trader from Kong po, a *mi ser* of the So nam las khungs to which he paid the *mi bogs*.[23] The *mi bogs* price was completely nominal, he said: around one Indian rupee.

The second reason why this distinction, based on a service relationship, was not that clear-cut, is that the *dkyus ma* group included managers' and treasurers' children working for the government. They were very often ex-monks as Goldstein underlines, and they were not serving any aristocratic or religious landlord. But there were also children of treasurers, managers employed in noble families or *bla brang*,[24] who were technically *mi ser* of the aristocratic or monastic landowners, even if they had obtained a high status. According to some informants, some of them were in the *dkyus ma* list and others in the *shod pa* list. And finally, many rich families of traders or farmers or managers, etc., themselves had servants (*g.yog po*).

2.3. Heterogeneity of the dkyus ma group: the professional and economic criteria

The professional criterion was not that relevant either, since there were treasurers' children in both lists of *dkyus ma* and *shod pa*, depending on whether the parents were working directly for the government or for a noble house or *bla brang*, and also on the status of the noble house. Craftsmen's children were also in both of them, depending on their status.[25] The economic criterion, the level of income, seems not to have been the most important consideration for the definition of "ordinary people" (*dkyus ma*) in Nang rong shar School, since there were big and small merchants in the *dkyus ma* list.

More generally, outside the context of the Nang rong shar School, some informants emphasised the fact that there could be no social category that could have encompassed whole professional groups like merchants, secretaries, treasurers, etc., for one good reason: among all these groups were small and rich people, and their economic situation also determined their social status.[26]

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[23] Interview n°6.

[24] Interview n°3.

[25] The differences between high- and low-status craftsmen need further investigation.

To return to our main question: from a Tibetan point of view, level of education, the economic circumstances, and whether one was or not in service all seem to have been relevant to the definition of social status. We will now examine if and how the *dkyus ma* group differs from the middle stratum described in the first part of this paper and how we should term these groups.

3. Some aspects of the determination and representations of social status and social group

3.1. Evolving and relative social status in Tibet

All professional categories that I suggest form an intermediate social group because of their kinship ties and a shared level of education, are part of the *dkyus ma* statutory group at the Nang rong shar School, with two exceptions. The first is the category of wealthy farmers and non-noble landowners, who could only rarely be enlisted since they lived outside Lhasa and would rather study in local regional schools or at home. The second are the craftsmen who were not, according to my sources, linked through marriage to other abovementioned groups.

It should be noted that, according to several informants, the *dkyus ma* group was not strictly speaking considered higher that the *shod pa* category. According to an informant, there was indeed a general hierarchy between the three name lists at Nang rong shar, but actually the hierarchy between the second and third was not clear and depended rather on individual cases than on membership of a particular group.[27] Social groups among the commoners were thus not hierarchically organised *per se*. In a way, the *dkyus ma* group was not strictly considered higher than the *shod pa* category, since some very learned servants of high aristocratic family could actually be considered to have higher status than small traders.

Each one shaped his status by his own agency, and certain persons would change groups in the course of their life,[28] starting as *shod pa*

[26] Interview n°1. As for the matrimonial criterion, she emphasises that apart from the *smad rigs* (lower strata or polluted strata), everyone could marry anybody.

[27] Interview n°7.

and becoming *dkyus ma*. This sort of social mobility is illustrated by the case of an informant's uncle, who started as a servant in a *bla brang*, and then became a monk official thanks to his education, and ceased thereafter to belong to the *shod pa* group.[29] In several other instances some individuals were allowed to be termed *dkyus ma* instead of *shod pa*, even if they were treasurers or managers of landlords—that is, servants. It appears then that the *dkyus ma* group was differentiated but not strictly hierarchised with the *shod pa* group.[30] Finally, Tibetans were also highly conscious of the fact that social status was not an essence, but took on its meaning only in a relational context.[31]

3.2. Theoretical debates and terminology of social groups

Until now, we have encountered several names used to describe this social intermediate group: "bourgeoisie" for Stein, "middle class" for Bell, and alternatively "middle class" and "middle stratum" for Goldstein. Individuals' social status and membership of social groups could be based on birth, profession, wealth, education or access to power, and were linked to individuals' membership of specific social groups. How these social groups should be designated, whether "caste", "order", "class" or "stratum", has been the object of extensive debate in social sciences, especially in the works of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Roland Mousnier, but there is insufficient space to present their arguments here. The choice of term depends mostly of the criterion considered to be most relevant to the aggregation of the social group, such as wealth, birth, prestige, and so forth.

Let us briefly recall the theoretical debates around the use of these terms. In the middle of the 19th century, Marx took a historical step by propagating his idea that all societies were divided into antagonistic social classes whose inequality was primarily based on relations of pro-

[28] Interview n°4.

[29] *Idem*.

[30] It is interesting to note that, generally speaking, in Tibetan society, there were social statuses which were not strictly defined. One good instance of blurred social status is those people who did not belong to any definite group, such as those termed "*ngo ma g.yog*" in noble houses. They were considered neither full members of the family, nor only servants; they were half-family, half-servants. In many instances, the term was applied to a distant relative who served in the house.

[31] For instance, for the same position in the territorial administration, the rank of a number of government officials would be higher when they were in their local post than when they were back in the capital of Lhasa.

duction. In the 1920s, Weber criticised Marx's economic reductionism, arguing that prestige and access to power were also decisive; he did not, however, effect a radical break with Marx, since he still based his definition of social classes on their relationship to the economic market. Weber introduced a distinction between social class and social order, the former being defined by economic considerations and the latter by symbolic considerations. Mousnier in the 1960s again criticised the Marxist economist interpretation that had been taken up by the Ecole des Annales, according to which societies had always been divided into classes, and social groups had always thought of themselves in economic terms of sharing the same level of fortune. He showed that in traditional European society, hierarchies would ignore levels of fortune, and that class organisation according to economic criteria appeared later in history. He introduced a distinction between what has been called "order societies", and "class societies", and which differ also from "caste societies". According to his theory, in "order societies", social distinction depends mostly on a hierarchy of honour and dignity;[32] in "caste societies", it depends mostly on criteria of religion and purity, while in "class societies", the distinction is based mostly on the economic criterion of possessing wealth or not (Mousnier 1969).[33] In the 1970s and 80s, Pierre Bourdieu criticised Weber's notion of "social class" and "social order" for its dissociation of economic and symbolic aspects. Bourdieu argued that economic and symbolic aspects always coexist in reality and, while continuing to use the term "class", estranged himself from the Marxist paradigm (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]). He proposed a theory of social space in which structure is defined by the distribution of different kinds of capital—economic, social and cultural—the elites being those who accumulate the largest quantity of all kinds of capital. He also insisted on the relational nature of social space and structure (Mauger 2013a).

The stratification theories, more or less inspired by Weber's analysis, have in common with the class theories that they also tend to rep-

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[32] In his view, the importance of wealth is not denied, but money is only a means to acquire and keep the external attributes of dignity and honour.

[33] The label "middle class" as it is now used in describing societies comes directly from such views, with the level of income serving as the first criterion. This definition is well rendered in the Tibetan neologism to denote the middle class: *'byor 'bring gral rim* (lit. "average fortune class").

resent society as an ensemble of hierarchically organised groups; however, "stratum" is much less narrowly defined,[34] since it is based on the level of revenue, together with the level of education, inequality of power, and prestige (Mauger 2013b). The term "stratum" has thus rightly been preferred to terms such as "class" (too narrowly restricted, in its most frequent use, to economic factors) or "order" (too closely related to Western *ancien régime* societies) or "caste" (Tibetan stratification is not mainly based on ritual purity) by many Tibetologists to describe Tibetan society. The question now is: how should we qualify the intermediate social elite?

3.3. The intermediate levels: "logical" or "virtual" strata

We thus have a social category that distinguishes itself to external observers through negative features—its members are close to political power but without real access to it—and through positive features—they belong to a number of precise professional activities, prefer to intermarry, and enjoy a high educational and economic level (for rich farmers, non-aristocratic *sger pa*). In Bourdieu's terms, we would say that they all shared a high portion of economic, social and cultural capital.

We can also confirm the existence of a conception of a "Tibetan intermediate status", as shown through the *dkyus ma* status in Nang rong shar. Sources have shown that the criteria—endogamy, education and wealth—for the aggregation of the social group observed in the first part are partly congruent with and partly distinct from the criteria for defining the *dkyus ma* group at Nang rong shar—that is, the relative independence of this group's members in practice, if not from a legal point of view.

The term "social stratum", a social entity less closed than the class, multidimensionaly defined, and conveying the idea of a continuum with other strata, seems to apply well to these intermediate elites, which were closely linked to the stratum of traditional elites. But there was no consensual Tibetan representation that corresponded to it exactly, and no consciousness of belonging to this stratum among the actors concerned. Bourdieu's approach again helps us to understand that a certain degree of unconsciousness on the part of the actors with regard to the

[34] A good definition of stratum is that "it designates groups of persons who have comparable status and share the same kind of living conditions and perspective of existence" (Roze 2013).

existence of a stratum does not imply its non-existence: "proximity in social space produces 'logical classes', 'classes on the paper', 'likely classes' or 'virtual classes' that are likely to be mobilised only after a symbolic and political construction work" (Bourdieu 1985 [1984], Mauger 2013a).

CONCLUSION: THE INTERMEDIATE STRATUM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

We do not have sufficient data to draw comparisons with the situation in historical periods prior to the beginning of the 20th century. Nonetheless, the reason why the criteria of belonging are diverse and have diverse orders of priority for informants could lie in the fact that the period under scrutiny was one of rapid changes; one where wealth and education seem to have played a larger role in social mobility than in the past, and where social hierarchy based on hereditary status was certainly more frequently destabilised. The definition and the boundaries of this intermediate elite group were permanently susceptible to redefinition: the debates around the definition of this non-institutionalised stratum are witnesses to intense social dynamics.

It is interesting to note that, when Chinese communists introduced the class struggle to Central Tibet, they recognised the existence of this intermediate elite stratum by labelling the rich farmers and all those professionally related to the former landlords, such as treasurers, managers (*mnga' tshab gral rim*: the class of representatives/stewards of feudal lords), and so forth, as class enemies, along with the landlords themselves (*mnga' bdag gral rim*: the class of feudal lords and serf owners), considering them as an elite. In particular, educated *mi ser* working as treasurers and managers or holding similar positions were thus assimilated into the aristocratic class (Woeser 2010 [2006]: 95, 131).

Finally, it is interesting to see the determinant role of the private schools, in Lhasa and in other towns or on country estates, in the formation of this middle class. The role played by education in this regard has been studied in other cultural areas and periods. G.M. Trevelyan, for example, has shown that the English grammar school, from the 15th to the 17th century, was an institution that allowed children of all social strata from the aristocracy, the gentry, city bourgeoisie and the yeomanry, to be educated together, and provided the arena in which the new

middle stratum would be shaped; whereas from the 18th century onward, the different educational institutions would ensure a strong class segregation (Trevelyan 1993 [1944]). The history of Tibetan schools, and the composition of the student body in other schools in Lhasa and other parts of Tibet would clearly be a fruitful avenue of investigation for our understanding of the formation Tibetan social strata.

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WHO WERE THE TIBETAN LAWMAKERS?

FERNANDA PIRIE

In the spirit expressed by the title of this book, I have framed my question as one about law-makers. This is very much a rhetorical question: in the case of many Tibetan legal texts we do not know anything about the authors. Asking the question may, nevertheless, shed light on wider, and more interesting, questions about the nature of Tibetan laws and how we should understand them, in their historical, social, and political contexts.

In this chapter I discuss a law-code I found amongst the nomads of Golok (mGo log), in eastern Tibet. We do not know who created it and can only guess its date and provenance. Nevertheless, questions about who is likely to have made such a code, and why, as well as questions about how it may have been used, are worth asking. From a historical perspective, it would be easy to dismiss this code on the basis that its practical application is uncertain—it seems unlikely that it was ever directly applied in the resolution of disputes—but we can consider how it might have been invoked, what it may have represented, and the aspirations of those who made and referred to it, taking advantage of recent histories of the region and contemporary fieldwork. The conclusions we can draw, in this regard, indicate ways in which we might approach and understand some of the better-known, and earlier, law-codes of Central Tibet, whose social contexts are necessarily less well understood. Primary among these are the texts known as the *zhal lce*.

LAWS AND LAW-MAKERS AS ASPECTS OF SOCIAL HISTORY

Before asking about law-makers, we need to ask about law. How should we identify law outside the familiar realms of the western world? What, indeed, should a social history of laws and law-making consist of? In the English-speaking world we tend to think of law in a number of different ways. Firstly, it is something made by a ruler to bring order to a society, a still-dominant strand in legal theory, a legacy of the jurispru-

dence of John Austin (1832). Secondly, it is something that reflects social norms, or is found in processes of conflict resolution, an approach that characterises much legal anthropology (Pirie 2013). Thirdly, it is a matter of rules, typically written codes, or legalism: that is, a way of thinking about and organising the world through the medium of explicit rules, using general and abstract categories (Dresch 2012). It is the third of these, I suggest, that allows for the most illuminating analysis of the Tibetan texts.

The idea that law is, essentially, a tool of government, which is enforced in the courts in order to produce social order, was developed by legal theorists to suit a model of state law, and must be employed with caution in pre-modern Tibet. Asking about social order quickly dissolves into questions about social life in general, while methods of conflict resolution, albeit interesting in themselves, may bear little relation to the content of any legal codes.[1] The legal codes with which I am concerned here need to be understood as sets of rules, ostensibly formulated to regulate legal processes, but which may, like legal texts elsewhere in the world, have symbolic, as much as regulatory, functions. The Golok code was not made by a state, or a state-like ruler, and, like the *zhal lce*, had a very uncertain relationship with legal (or any other) practice.

The Golok code

Until the momentous changes wrought by the Chinese government after 1958, many of the tribes that herd yaks and sheep on the lush grasslands of Amdo retained a significant degree of autonomy from any form of centralised political control.[2] This was particularly so in Golok, to the southeast of the region, where the tribes were led by hereditary ruling families, the *xhombo* (*dpon po*).[3] They formed a loose confederacy, but often came into conflict with one another, as well as combining to wage

[1] These are issues which have long concerned legal anthropologists, as witnessed by the debates over "legal pluralism" (Pirie 2013).

[2] The details in this section have, to a large extent, been drawn from my earlier work, in particular Pirie (2009). I carried out around twelve months of fieldwork in Amdo between 2003 and 2007.

[3] I transcribe this term according to local pronunciation, and names according to standard formulations, adding the Wylie transliteration in brackets.

war, periodically, on their neighbours. The Golok tribes were historically renowned for their violence, a reputation that remains in the twenty-first century. Accounts by Robert Ekvall from the early twentieth century depict a pattern of feuding and mediation: in cases of inter-tribal conflict it was necessary to call upon high-status mediators, normally chiefs from other tribes, Buddhist lamas, or famous orators, who would exercise their powers of argument, persuasion, cajolery, and appeals to honour and self-interest to bring the parties to accept compensation in lieu of further violence (Ekvall 1964: 1140; 1968: 77–80). There was no question of an adjudicator applying the rules of a code to make a judgment and impose a punishment; agreement had to be achieved through mediation and negotiated indemnity (1968: 76).

During fieldwork conducted in the early twenty-first century, I found that despite the presence of the Chinese state, whose governmental structures, agents, and police force penetrate far into the grasslands, practices of feuding and mediation continue in a form that follows much the same principles as those described by Ekvall. When feuds escalate they may continue for decades unless a high-ranking Buddhist lama or a renowned mediator from one of the ruling families intervenes and successfully promotes a settlement. Just as Ekvall describes it, the process of mediation is tentative and contingent upon the mediators' powers of persuasion; they have to threaten or cajole the parties to accept the solution they are proposing or there can be no final settlement (Pirie 2008). It came as a considerable surprise, then, to find a historic law-code still being referred to in the region. As I describe elsewhere (Pirie 2009), this code was printed as part of the history of the region, its substance based upon interviews carried out by the authors with those who could remember the content of the written codes that had existed before 1958. One of my informants was able to recite some of the provisions of these codes from memory in 2004. I gathered two, different, copies of the text, one in Chinese and one in Tibetan, both of which were reprinted as part of projects to record oral histories in the region in the 1980s.[4] Their basic content is the same, although the lat-

[4] The Chinese text is in a book entitled *A collection of materials on the culture and heritage of Qinghai*, edited by the Qinghai Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference and its Committee for Research on Culture and History, and published in 1982 by the Qinghai People's Press. The Tibetan text has been published in at least two slightly different versions, one entitled *mGo log rig gnas lo rgyus* (A history of Golok culture), by the Golok Prefecture Committee for Historical Research, in 1991.

ter is longer, more elaborate, and contains several of the maxims and aphorisms (*gtam dpe*), for which the region is famous. The two main sections of the code contain, firstly, general and directive rules for the making of war,[5] specifying how tribal leaders should organise their forces and select commanders, and secondly, detailed and specific provisions for the making of peace, that is, the amounts and nature of the compensation to be paid after killings and injuries.

The introduction to the longer codes starts with a reference to Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po), the seventh-century Tibetan emperor. He is said to have been the author of a set of moral laws, the *Mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug*, stipulating that people should respect their religion and family, and behave well in other respects, and these are set out in the code. His moral laws, the text continues, were considered and each tribe made its own laws (*khrims*), with directions as to how they should be applied. These laws are divided into four classes (*byed thabs*).

The content of the laws can be summarised as follows, although the provisions of the Chinese version are somewhat less complex. First are the nine "rules for subduing the enemy". These are largely directive in nature, specifying how the *xhombo* should organise events at times of conflict, including the selection of commanders. They direct, for example, that if possessions have been stolen the *xhombo* must summon people to recover them; that if a fight has occurred and someone has been killed or possessions have been stolen the *xhombo* must send men to take revenge; that in the event of a serious dispute, the two groups must be kept apart, sentries must be posted, and a rotating guard must be set up; that when there is important business to be done the *xhombo* or other leaders must call meetings; and that the *xhombo* must carefully select those to go on raiding parties. They also direct cooperation on the part of the members of the group, in particular those sent out to recover stolen possessions, those summoned to meetings, and those sent on raiding parties, who, on their return, must share what they have seized. The rules also specify the number of soldiers to be supplied by three different classes of families—high, middle, and low—thus indicating a form of class distinction.

[5] The code refers to war (*dmag*) but we should probably think, rather, of the feuds that still arise between the tribes, both within the Golok tribal confederacy and in relations with the surrounding tribes.

The second set of rules is for resolving conflict within a tribe.[6] They begin with a preamble which establishes the position and status of the mediator (*gzu ba*) and continues by expressing the principle that if you attack a member of another group that is your own affair; but if someone attacks yours it is a matter for the whole group. The implication is that restraint should be shown in initiating a conflict but that defence of the group requires loyalty and solidarity. The rules in this section contain complex provisions specifying the amounts of blood money that must be paid in the event of a killing, the compensation that must be paid in the event of theft, the amount of compensation appropriate for threats and injuries, and brief provisions for compensation in the event of wife stealing. The amounts are expressed in terms of horses, guns, yaks, and silver coins. They also specify the amounts needed in order to secure a truce after a killing, the apology payment to be made to the *xhombo*, payments to the victim's family, widow, and children. A repeated provision is that the amounts depend upon the status of the victim—high, middle, or low. These provisions are specific and prescriptive in form. They also specify what the mediator must take into account in formulating a solution, including the nature of the injuries and the possibility that the victim might be lying about the cause of his injuries, the nature of a theft, whether from the mountains or from within an encampment—the latter is regarded as being much more grave—the degree of fault, and specifying that property must be confiscated—implicitly by the *xhombo*—if a theft has taken place within a single group. There are also procedural provisions for the use of witnesses, the testing of evidence, and the making of oaths, including the possibility of divination and ordeals.

In the longer version, this section continues with supplemental rules (*'gug*) concerning personal morality and the virtues of truthfulness and helpfulness, stating that it is not shameful to take revenge in specific cases and underlining the need for solidarity within the group. There is a definition of the statuses—high, middle, and low—which is expressed in terms of loyalty to the *xhombo* and personal morality. Finally it specifies the need to punish those who disobey the *xhombo*, deserters from the battlefield, and those who stir up problems.

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[6] There are several Tibetan terms used to designate tribal groups in Amdo, many of which can be used to refer to either a large group, or to one of its sub-divisions.

As I have discussed elsewhere (2009), it is inconceivable that these laws were ever directly enforced. The compensation provisions are impractically complex and the amounts specified far outweigh the sums currently awarded, as well as requiring the use of silver coins that must have been rare. Moreover, neither contemporary informants nor ethnographic accounts suggest that mediation processes ever took a substantially different form from those that occur now. It seems likely that the codes were referred to during the lengthy speech-making that characterised such processes, along with appeals to religion, moral principles, and the authority of tradition. The principles and payments they set out may well have provided the basis for negotiation of what might be accepted as appropriate compensation for an unavenged wrong. There is also historical evidence that the people of Golok regarded their laws as ancient, unchanging, and a symbol of their independence. A Russian explorer recorded the boast of a confident and confrontational tribesman: unlike the timid subjects of the Dalai Lamas, he declared, "we [...] have from time immemorial obeyed none but our own laws, none but our own convictions [...] they have never been altered" (Kozloff 1908: 522–28). The codes may, then, have had the authority of tradition, which could have assisted the mediators' task. They also stood as a symbol of the independence and historical autonomy of the Golok tribes.

Who, then, might have made them, and why? To a large extent, the codes reflect the forms of mediation that are still practised among the Amdo nomads, in particular the payment for life or injury as a means of establishing peace after a conflict. They also reflect the sanctity of the encampment, a principle I also noted in contemporary mediation practices (2008: 227). On the other hand, the specificity of the codes' provisions, in both versions, is striking, as is the fact that they repeatedly refer to social status—high, middle, and low. There is no evidence of such status distinctions ever being marked in practice, below the small class of *xhombo*.

Status is the basis for the calculation of punishments in fragments of legal texts that survive from the Tibetan empire (Thomas 1936). The specification of rank and status was also a feature of Anglo-Saxon and early Irish law-codes (Kelly 1988), while the detailing of precise amounts payable by way of compensation for various wrongs is familiar from ancient codes of the classical and pre-classical periods, from Mesopotamia, through ancient Greece and Rome, to medieval Iceland

(Miller 1990; Whitman 1996). As Whitman suggests, it is unlikely that such codes were ever applied in detail; rather, the rules, and their specificity, seem to have created a sense of system and order, in and of themselves. Placing people into different ranks, as the codes do, presents a model of social order, which may have suited the vision of a ruler keen to portray himself at the pinnacle of a social hierarchy. In the Golok case, the codes also encapsulate ideals of honour, revenge, loyalty, and family and tribal solidarity. Above all, they repeatedly affirm the need for loyalty towards the *xhombo*. The codes, that is, might be regarded as the work of the *xhombo*, designed to reinforce their status as mediators and war-leaders.

They also seem to evoke a sense of commonality within what could be regarded as a loose confederacy between the Golok tribes, whose ruling families claimed descent from three brothers. In a society in which conflict was common, and to some extent admired, tribal relations have always, in practice, been unstable. As Dresch (2006: 283–97) also found when analysing eighteenth-century law-codes from tribal Yemen, a text that articulates shared principles for both the conduct of warfare and the achievement of peace suggests that the tribespeople, although divided and often antagonistic, participated in a single moral domain. The codes may have been, and remain, important in and of themselves, as a vision for tribal society.

Another clue as to the authorship of the codes or, at least, to authorial influences, lies in the brief references in the preamble to the "laws" of Songtsen Gampo. This indicates a link with the *zhal lce* (discussed further below), which claimed to have been based upon the laws handed down by the great Tibetan emperor. Copies of the *zhal lce* were widely distributed under the Ganden Podrang (dGa' ldan pho brang) government (1642–1959) and knowledge of this code could have provided inspiration for the authors of the Golok laws. Although their content is very different, there is some similarity in style, as I discuss further below. Despite, therefore, the assertions of uniqueness and independence, made at other times by the Golok tribesmen about themselves and their laws, the authors of these codes were representing their tribes as part of a wider Buddhist civilisation. The code indicated that they participated in a historic Tibetan civilisation, with its roots in the activities of Songtsen Gampo.

Contemporary fieldwork has indicated that this code retains importance in the eyes of the Golok tribespeople, both as a historic record

and as an indication of enduring tribal values. Its details and aphorisms affirm principles of loyalty and revenge; they provide a partial map for tribal relations that were essentially unregulated, save by shared values; and these values are still adhered to in the modern world, dominated though it is by the structures of the Chinese state. The code does not regulate anything (if it ever did), but we could say that it articulates the principles on which tribal relations could, and should, be negotiated; it also represents an ideal for tribal society, which it presented as being founded upon recognisable religious and moral principles, sanctioned by historic tradition.

In what follows, I ask whether these insights might suggest ways in which we can explore the origins and significance of the earlier *zhal lce* from Central Tibet.

THE *ZHAL LCE*

The text that came to be widely regarded, under the Ganden Podrang government, as an authoritative statement of Tibetan law is generally known as the *Khrims yig zhal lce bcu gsum/bcu drug* (the law book containing 13/16 laws), or in its abridged name, the *zhal lce*. The earliest code, in fact containing fifteen laws, is attributed by the Fifth Dalai Lama to the era of Changchub Gyaltsen (Byang chub rgyal mtshan) in the fourteenth century.[7] His historical chronicle claims that they were based upon the ten virtues of Songtsen Gampo (Schuh 1984; Ahmad 1995: 141–42). A version with sixteen laws dates from the time of Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (Karma bsTan skyong dbang po, ruled 1620–1642). Although the product of a Tsang (gTsang) ruler, it continued to be used during the Ganden Podrang period and served as a base for codes with thirteen and twelve laws, written between 1653 and 1655 (Ishihama 1993: 39). This continuity in the use of the laws is described, by the Regent Desi Sangye Gyatso (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho), as descending on the new rulers "like a stream of water".[8] These early

[7] I am grateful to Christoph Cüppers for his assistance with the details of these codes.

[8] The statement reads: *zhal lce bcu drug tu grags pa gtsang dus nas rje bla ma'i chos srid gdugs dkar gyis khyab nas deng sang bar chu 'bab tu song zhing*—[the law-code which] is known in sixteen laws came from the time of the gTsang [rulers] like a waterfall to the present times since the white umbrella of Lama Lord [= Fifth Dalai Lama] covers all religious and political affairs. See *Khrims skor dogs sel*: 188.

versions claim to have been based on the laws written by the mythical ancient Indian king, Melong Dong (*Me long gdong*) (van der Kuijp 1999: 268).

The code is written as a set of directions to government officials, containing administrative directions about the amounts of money they might raise for living allowances and expenses, and also containing moralistic directions as to how they should behave and enact justice.[9] It describes the exemplary punishments that may be meted out for more heinous crimes, and lists compensation payments for various injuries and wrongs. Some of the provisions are repetitive and contradictory, suggesting that they might be compilations from previous laws. They also contain provisions for legal procedure, in particular the taking of oaths. The punitive provisions in the laws, which comprise the majority of them, are largely directed at the offences of murder, causing injuries, and theft, with the addition of three laws on adultery, divorce, and the non-return of borrowed livestock. A longer version includes a long catalogue of official salaries and provisions for the legal treatment of non-Tibetans (Meisezahl 1973).

It is also worth considering what else was included within some of the documents in which the text was reproduced. An early text analysed by Meisezahl (*ibid.*), containing sixteen laws, is followed by a list of minor decrees: categories of public dangers, minor penalties—including fines to be paid in kind—and provisions concerning the authority of the *dzongpon* (*rdzong dpon*), regional officials, who had responsibility for dealing with minor crimes. The text ends with tables of weights and measures. Another early text includes complicated tables, containing 84 rows and three columns, which set out economic values for various categories of goods, according to three measures. A nineteenth-century version includes the same provisions for public dangers and rules for particular cases of punishments, along with lists of legal costs (Meisezahl 1992).

As well as these legalistic provisions, some of the early documents also contain more narrative provisions. One of the early texts includes an account of military campaigns; it sets out a decree by Altan Khan (1507–1582), including a prediction of the Buddha that his religion would spread northward, and records that it was Songtsen Gampo who

[9] I base this analysis largely on the rough translation prepared for Charles Bell, a manuscript copy of which is in the British Library, reference MSS Eur F80/169.

brought the teachings into the uncivilised land of Tibet (Meisezahl 1973). The text of 1653–1655 contains a historical narrative discussing the relationship between the Dalai Lamas and the Mongol rulers (Ishihama 1993: 39). Later versions, recorded in Sikkim (White 1894) and by Tharchin in 1954 (Schuh 1984: 298), also claim to have been founded upon the laws pronounced by Melong Dong and by Songtsen Gampo.

There is, of course, much uncertainty over the origins, use and significance of these codes and much yet to be gained from close textual analysis. In what follows, I simply suggest some of the ways in which the codes might be interpreted in their social and historical contexts, and what might be revealed by comparison with the provisions of the Golok code.

ORIGINS

Obvious questions arise about the origins of the *zhal lce* texts—can we trace parts of it back to earlier codes, including the historical narratives and the tradition that originated in the empire?—which I cannot address here. But we can also ask about those who made and preserved the texts, not so much their identity, but the wider authorial influences, purposes, and aspirations. These might have included regulation and regularisation, that is a desire to present a new regime as a successor to the Tibetan empire, and Changchub Gyaltsen as the guardian, or foundation, of its civilisation and laws.

As Schuh (1984: 299) has pointed out, despite the various claims, the *zhal lce* are not based on the moral codes known as the *dge ba bcu* or the *mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug*. A glance at their content indicates as much. The influence of Buddhism, he says, was "a retrospective, purely fictitious, ideological construct" (1984: 300). Van der Kuijp (1999: 288) remarks, similarly, on "the total absence of anything that might remotely be construed as Buddhist, except for their propagandistic introductions written for the purposes of legitimation and authority". This rather dismissive statement was made in the context of his critique of French's (1995) *The Golden Yoke,* which presents a picture of an essentially Buddhist Tibetan legal realm. However, it is worth asking whether Changchub Gyaltsen might have made a set of laws and, in any event, why the Fifth Dalai Lama chose to present his text as having

been written in the fourteenth century, as well as claiming earlier, and Buddhist, precedents.

In 1239 the Mongols had swept into Tibet, having already conquered much of Eurasia. The reaction of Tibet's religious leaders, most successfully Sakya Pandita (Sa skya paṇ ḍi ta, 1182–1251), leader of the Sakya sect, was to convert the Mongols to Buddhism, which led to what has been described as a patron-client relationship between their respective leaders—the secular (Mongol) ruler and the religious (Tibetan) teacher or lama (Kapstein 2006: 110–16). The subsequent weakening of the Mongols' Yüan dynasty in China, however, gave the opportunity for Changchub Gyaltsen, leader of the Pagmodru (Phag mo gru) religious order, to challenge Sakyapa-Mongol rule and, eventually, to set himself up as a prince. He adopted the title *desi* (*sde srid*), an old imperial term meaning "regent", and was awarded the title of Tai Situ (chief minister) by the Mongols (Kapstein 2006: 116–18).

An early *zhal lce* text asserts that the code replaced the Mongols' laws (*hor khrims*) with a set of Tibetan laws (*bod khrims*) (Meisezahl 1973). This might indicate that Changchub Gyaltsen wanted to assert control over this area of governmental administration at a time when Mongol power was waning. According to Snellgrove and Richardson (1968: 152–55) he "undertook an active policy of removing the traces of Mongol influence and of deliberately restoring the glories of the old Tibet of the Religious Kings".[10] As Sørensen (1994: 34–35) puts it, he was a "nationally and independently minded politician" who embarked upon a nationalistic quest, which included the codification of a set of laws resembling the code supposed to have been executed by Songtsen Gampo. Given the importance of the imperial legacy in contemporary historical narratives, it seems only natural that he should have done this by modelling himself on the great Tibetan emperors, whose activities included the making of laws.[11] There are precedents for this type of law-making in post-Roman Europe, where Charlemagne, along with other kings and princes, modelled his laws on Justinian's code. As Wormald (1998: 27–30) puts it, Charlemagne's laws represented an aspect of his imperial dignity, since legislation had been, *par excel-*

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[10] This interpretation is supported by Tucci (1949: 23) and Dreyfus (1994: 210) although some doubt is cast on it by van der Kuijp (1991).

[11] That he made laws is also confirmed in the chronicle of his life by Sonam Drakpa (bSod nams grags pa) (Tucci 1971).

lence, a function of the Roman emperors. A similar impulse might also explain the later decision of the Fifth Dalai Lama, during the very early stages of the Ganden Podrang government, to reproduce an earlier code—or parts of it—or at least to claim that his laws had been written at the time of an earlier ruler. He was presenting his government as the latest in a tradition of Tibetan kingship, and was invoking the legacy of a predecessor known for his independence, after a long period of Mongol domination.

A parallel with the activities of the Golok law-makers might be drawn here: the laws served to present the rulers, and their realms, as part of a long tradition of Buddhist civilisation. They also explicitly invoke the legacy of Songtsen Gampo and claim Buddhist origins. This would have resonated with Tibetan historical narratives, which claimed that law-making had been an activity of the early emperors, who made religious laws (*chos khrims*) to replace the sinful, royal laws (*rgyal khrims*) (Stein 1986). The fourteenth century *Padma bka'i thang* (Toussaint 1933: 269–72), for example, includes a series of verses describing the activities of Tri Song Detsen (Khri Srong lde btsan) and how he asked for the *dharma* to be brought from India. It describes a declaration (*bka' khrims*) to the effect that he was king and protector of religion, and supplemented the royal law (the golden yoke and heavy ingot) with religious law (which was like a silken knot, soft and sacred). The claims in these narratives are far from consistent, but they generally assert imperial Buddhist origins for Tibetan law. Given this, as well as the prevailing ideology of harmony between the religious and the political, any Tibetan ruler would have had to claim Buddhist origins for a law-code, particularly one containing harsh punishments.[12]

THE CODES IN PRACTICE

Copies of the *zhal lce* were reproduced and distributed around Tibet: as well as the copies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there are

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[12] The document written in 1653/55, containing thirteen of the laws, was described as the *mchod yon nyi zla zung gi khrims yig* (laws relating to the donor/donee, sun/moon) (Ishihama 1993; van der Kuijp 1999). It contains a narrative asserting that Tibet is the land of Avalokiteśvara and discusses the relationship between the Dalai Lamas and the "kings" (Mongolian rulers). This could be regarded as an implicit representation of the principle of *chos srid zung 'brel*.

references to their being in the possession of district officials, including in Sakya, which had remained semi-independent into the twentieth century, and Sikkim, which was essentially an independent kingdom from the mid-seventeenth century (White 1894; Macdonald 1932; Dawa Norbu 1974). Chandra Das (1902: 1068) in his dictionary describes the *zhal lce* as "enactments in force in Tibet".

A code created in the seventeenth century—quite possibly based on a fourteenth-century precedent—was, therefore, being distributed and described as Tibetan law into the twentieth century. However, with its rather confusing, inconsistent, and precise provisions for compensation, it could hardly have been the practical basis for judicial practice. Indeed, there is no evidence that these codes were ever referred to in detail by the judges. There were courts in Lhasa and other urban centres, although no professional judges (Kapstein 2006: 191). Documents record their activities, from which it is evident that petitioners would bring their cases to Lhasa officials if they had failed to obtain what they saw as justice locally, although these officials also seem to have been reluctant to decide cases, preferring to send them back to regional officials or the aristocratic rulers of the estates in which they had originated (Cassinelli and Ekvall 1969: 92–93; Schuh 1984: 227; Pirie 2007: 165–66). Nevertheless, these officials did, at times, preside over a settlement. Dawa Norbu (1974), for example, discusses what he calls "the law's delays" in Sakya: there was an ornately bound copy of the *zhal lce* in the courtroom, which was ceremoniously consulted on delicate points of procedure by the judges, but only the highest officers had access to it. There is no evidence that any of its substantive laws were ever applied (Cassinelli and Ekvall 1969: Ch. 6). As Schuh (1984: 305–306) describes, the overriding principle seems to have been one of agreement between the parties and it was never the case that the judge imposed a legal solution on the parties.

The parallels with the Golok codes are obvious. Reference to the *zhal lce* by government officers might well have been made for rhetorical purposes, and as a source of legitimacy, in a way not too dissimilar to the Golok mediators' and *xhombos*' use of their code. We should not think in terms of their practical use and application, that is, at least not without direct evidence. Rather, we should think in terms of what the codes represented and how they might have been invoked.

LEGALISM AND LITERARY STYLE

An important, often overlooked, aspect of the *zhal lce*, is the legalistic provisions, including the minor decrees and lists of weights and measures found in the accompanying texts. Other documents written in the early decades of the Ganden Podrang government also contain detailed, precise, and legalistic provisions for the conduct of government officials: the Fifth Dalai Lama established seating rules for officials; and in 1681 the Regent Desi Sangye Gyatso issued a document containing twenty-one rules and a myriad of sub-rules for the behaviour and competence of government officials, making fine distinctions about grades of officials, salaries, qualities of food, and serving dishes (Cüppers 1997). As discussed in relation to the Golok code, the regularising aims of legal codes have been noted widely in texts from the ancient world onwards. The authors can be regarded as presenting the rulers, their offices, and laws as the foundation of regularity and order within their polities.

Both texts also contain maxims, metaphors, and aphorisms, employing a quite different literary style. Several of the laws begin with a metaphorical statement, often in poetic form, and often apparently obscure, even to Tibetans. The law on the conduct of judges contains the following:[13]

> The judge should be as spotless as the moon holding the hare and be seen and accessible to everyone. It is said that when the light of truth shines the light of falsehood vanishes. First of all according to evidence, it should be ascertained whether the parties are equals, if they are not there should be no interrogation (between them).

Another begins as follows:

> Burn the malicious (prickly) thorn in the fire of law and by the sap of the cloud of law let the earth be turned into a fertile one, so that the harvest thereon may be prosperous. Therefore arrest them that lodge a complaint and violate the law knowingly by striking with weapons.

[13] The following quotes are based on the manuscript translation in the British Library (see footnote 9).

They contrast with other laws that contain precise punishments and provisions, sometimes attributing them to "former laws" or Chinese penalties. In the law on murder, for example, it is said:

> In the case of murder among priests the property of the murderer should be confiscated and used for the purpose of charity and the murdered should be banished from the place. In the case of the murder of a king or lama [...] impose a penalty of 120 *sang* (*srang*) and a fine of 12 *sang*.
>
> There are 6 different penalties [...].
>
> One government *sang* is equal to one score of barley, two score of barley are equal to one score of butter. Two *sang* are equal to five gold *sang* and five silver *sang*[...]. The release penalty is realised in three parts, one third in gold and silver, one third in horse, cattle and armour, and the rest in other articles of insignificant value.

The difference in tone and language is striking. The aphorisms are literary, complex, suggestive, and allusive, unlike the precise, explicit, and straightforward legalism of what we might call the substantive content of the rules. The readers are being directed to act (legally) in specific ways, but also inspired to act (morally) through metaphor and allusion.

In other ways, the two sets of laws are quite different, indicating the very different social contexts in which they were created. The *zhal lce*, as befits a ruler (or rulers) setting out to centralise his government, are directed at government officials, principally stipulating the ways in which they should conduct the judicial aspects of their administration. The penal nature of these laws was quite possibly inspired by the Chinese law-codes, which were overwhelmingly penal in nature (MacCormack 1996). The Golok codes, by contrast, are clearly designed for mediators acting with a tribal context, concerned with the conduct of feuding and antagonism between warlike tribespeople, and with the ways in which truces can be negotiated, compensation negotiated, honour satisfied, and peace restored.

Conclusions

The Golok code embodies a combination of authorial influences, purposes, and aspirations. These include regulation and regularisation, reflected in their legalism. The texts also make use of aphorisms, maxims, and metaphors, evoking general moral principles. They can be

read, in part, as an assertion, by the *xhombo*, of their status, of the relations of loyalty that bind them to their tribespeople, and their participation in the wider, historic, Buddhist civilisation of Tibet. All these elements might usefully be explored in relation to the *zhal lce*, whether they were created under Changchub Gyaltsen, or substantially written by the Fifth Dalai Lama, as well as the texts distributed later under the Ganden Podrang government. The *zhal lce* contain penal laws and ostensibly aim to regulate and regularise, but they also appeal to history, religion, and precedent, implicitly presenting the Ganden Podrang government as successor to earlier Tibetan polities, and the Dalai Lamas as heirs to the legacy of Songtsen Gampo.

It would be a mistake to think we might find a single style or set of principles we can call "Tibetan law". The substance of these two sets of codes reflects the very different social and political dynamics of their contexts. However, looking beyond the content, their distinctive mixture of styles—legalistic and aphoristic—provides some clue to the ways in which Tibetans, over a wide area, and separated by several centuries, may have thought about the nature and purpose of their laws.

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RECAPTURING RUNAWAYS, OR ADMINISTRATION THROUGH CONTRACT: THE 1830 COVENANT (*GAN RGYA*) ON KOTAPA TAX EXILES AND SIKKIMESE BORDER REGIONS[1]

SAUL MULLARD

INTRODUCTION

Runaway *mi ser* were an issue of concern to the authorities of Tibetan societies. For example, as Jeannine Bischoff shows in her paper in this volume, a sharp rise in runaways in 1889 had serious consequences: the inability of estate lords to pay their taxes to the government. If, therefore, we accept the American sociologist and historian Charles Tilly's view that one of the principal functions of a state is to extract tax (Tilly 2006: 419), the reduction of tax revenue resulting from runaways should have been something that "Tibetan" states took seriously. This is apparent in Sikkim from a number of administrative documents, including the document which is the subject of this paper: a covenant which recounts the events surrounding the recapture of the head of an aristocratic family and his runaway taxpayers (see figure 1). As has been noted elsewhere (Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 4–10), tax collection in Sikkim was largely the responsibility of hereditarily appointed offi-

[1] I would like to thank Dr Hissey Wongchuk for his help and assistance during the time this paper was researched. Particular thanks go to him for his assistance in editing the Tibetan text of the 1830 Covenant cited in this paper. I would also like to thank Jenny Bentley for giving me access to the Nepali documents collected in Ilam regarding the Kotapa branch of the Barfung clan, and to Rajen Upadyay (Namchi College-Sikkim University) for translating them and other works in Nepali. Thanks also to Christoph Cüppers for his comments and suggestions on the Tibetan document and translation, and to Alice Travers and Fabienne Jagou for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

[2] The majority of Sikkimese estates were controlled by hereditary lords, though there were of course royal estates, and five monastic estates in pre-modern Sikkim. There also existed an intermediate group of people who acted as estate managers, sub-divisional *rdzong dpon*, and smaller scale tax collectors of the *bcu dpon*, *rgya dpon*, and *spyi dpon* (pronounced *pyipön* in Sikkim), and *lding dpon* rank. See Mullard and Wongchuk 2010 for a summary of the ranks of administrative officials in Sikkim.

cials,[2] who formed a group in Sikkimese society that can be regarded as an elite class. In the present paper this class is defined as "the aristocracy" or "nobility" of Sikkim in that they resemble Marc Bloch's definition of the nobility as a group with "a legal status of its own, which confirms and makes effectual the superiority to which it lays claim" (Bloch 2005 [1961]: 1). To be an aristocratic class according to Bloch, inheritance and wealth are not enough, there also needs to be a legal underpinning (*ibid.*). In pre-modern Sikkim this is contained in several documents such as *La sogs rgyal rabs* (which defines the relationships between the monarch and the aristocracy and the aristocracy and the commoners) as well as in individual land grants, which not only grant land but also privileges to the recipients. In addition and over time the families that made up the Sikkimese aristocracy were also defined by the titles of minister or lord (*blon, yap* [*yar po*], and *yug*, or *a mthing* for Lepchas) and, under the British, *kazi.*

These families controlled significant areas and wielded immense political, social and economic power both within the Sikkimese state but also amongst the common people bound to their estates. The kings (or *chos rgyal*) of Sikkim were not absolute rulers but were in fact relatively weak, with their ability to exercise power in the kingdom largely dependent upon the tacit consent of the nobility. As a result Sikkim's history is characterised by the negotiation between the kings with high status and theoretical/legal power on the one hand, and the dependence of the kings on the real economic and political power of the aristocracy on the other. The document which is the subject of this paper is an interesting example of this relationship, in which the Sikkimese state's interest in preventing the removal of taxpayers from Sikkim can be identified and understood on several different levels. This paper, therefore, addresses both the issues of taxation and territory on the one hand and the negotiation of power and the loyalty of the aristocracy and elite to the king on the other. These two broad themes are explored through a covenant or *gangya* (*gan rgya*) enacted in 1830 as a result of the Kotapa (Ko tā pa) insurrection, which began in 1826. For the sake of this paper and its readers the *gangya* has been given the title of "The 1830 Covenant on tax exiles and Sikkimese border regions" (PD/1.2/004).[3] This paper is divided in order to illustrate the Sikkimese

[3] This refers to the document number in the catalogue of the Sikkimese Palace Archives. See Mullard and Wongchuk (2010) for details.

background to the Kotapa dispute and the presentation of the covenant which, when placed in its historical context, provides important insights into the themes of taxation, territorial security, loyalty, and the negotiation of power between the king and the elite.

Historical Background

In 1826 the Sikkimese Chancellor, Bolhö (Bo lhod aka: rNam rgyal phun tshogs),[4] along with his wife and son, were executed by order of the seventh Chögyal (*chos rgyal*) of Sikkim—Tsugphü Namgyal (gTsug phud rnam rgyal). The execution was, most likely, an attempt to wrest back power from the Barfung ('Bar spung, Lepcha: Barfung)[5] family, who had ruled Sikkim for eighty-three years, and re-establish the political authority of the Namgyal dynasty. This dramatic and violent change in Sikkimese politics had, as Sprigg rightly noted (Sprigg 1995: 89–90), a number of unintended consequences, which had an impact upon the financial and political security of the Sikkimese state. One such consequence was the rebellion of the Kotapa, or Ilam branch, of the Barfung clan,[6] which in turn threatened the security of tax revenue from the Kotapa estates, which included areas in Vijaypur, Chainpur, Ilam, Darjeeling (Kurseong [Gar rdzong] and Nagri jong [Nag ri rdzong]), and the Sikkimese plains estates (*rgya gzhis*) from which the majority of Sikkim's tax revenue originated. Whilst the Kotapa rebellion has been studied by a number of Nepalese historians,[7] original and primary Sikkimese sources have not been used. Unfortunately, this omission has led to serious errors in the Nepalese

4 In order to assist those readers familiar with Tibetan, Tibetan words appear in Wylie transliteration after the first appearance of the word. To aid those readers unfamiliar with Tibetan, all names have been rendered in a phonetic transliteration.

5 This family is called Barfung on account that they are members of the Lepcha *Barfungmo* clan. This name is frequently rendered in Tibetan as *'Bar spung*, though other orthographic representations can be found such as: *Bar phungs*, *Ba' pung*, and *'Ba' phungs*. This name should not be confused with Barmiok (*'Bar myag*), a place in South Sikkim and estate of the Barmiok Kazis, a sub-branch of the Barfung family. The eldest member of the Barfung family is considered the head of the clan and is responsible for the completion of annual clan rituals. This is currently Barmiok Rinpoche Tashi Densapa, the middle son of the last Barmiok Kazi T. D. Densapa (conversation with Barmiok Rinpoche, April 2013).

6 They are most probably so named after Kota in modern eastern Nepal.

7 See Bajracharya and Shrestha 1978, Manandhar 1983, and Mishra 2012.

works, in which the complex political context of the Nepal-Sikkim frontier has been, if not ignored then at least, misunderstood. In those Nepalese works the border seems fixed and the dispute has been understood only within the context of the international relations of Nepal (with very few attempts at understanding the conflict from the Sikkimese side). Instead these borderlands were defined more by shared and multiple relationships of power, authority, and the shifting loyalties of local leaders than (nation) state control and administration. The Kotapa episode, therefore, needs to be understood in the political, economic, and social environment of the frontier on the one hand and the needs of the states of Nepal and Sikkim to extend control over that frontier, on the other (Mullard forthcoming).

In order to both understand the Kotapa dispute and the 1830 covenant we need to be aware of the wider historical background of Sikkim. In 1736 the fourth Sikkimese king Gyurme Namgyal ('Gyur med rnam rgyal) died issueless and without naming a successor to the throne. This crisis led to the Second War of Succession,[8] involving two rival factions in the Sikkimese court: Tamdin (rendered rTa mgrin in the *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs*)—the Sikkimese Chancellor (*phyag mdzod*)[9]—and Gawang Barfungpa (Gar dbang), a Lepcha descendant of the second king's illegitimate son (see simplified genealogy of the Barfung clan below). Tamdin, on account of his position as chancellor and a member of the Tongde ru zhi (*stong sde ru/s bzhi*)[10]—the group of Lho po or Tibeto-Sikkimese clans to which the first Sikkimese kings belonged—claimed the Sikkimese throne for himself. He ruled Sikkim well into the 1740s. Meanwhile, Garwang made the claim that there was indeed an heir to the Sikkimese throne, who had been born after the death of Gyurme Namgyal to a nun from Sang-nga Chöling (gSang sngags chos gling) in western Sikkim. This child, named Namgyal Phuntshog, was taken by Garwang and his father, Gyatso Barfungpa

[8] For details on The First War of Succession see Mullard 2011: 162–65.

[9] Normally the title of *phyag mdzod* is translated as treasurer. In Sikkim, however, the *phyag mdzod* was more than just a minister of finance: he had an important executive function and was the main minister responsible for the rule of the country. As a result the title of chancellor (in its mediaeval English sense) seems quite appropriate. There were three main ministers of state in Sikkim: *phyag mdzod, mgron gnyer* (Lord Chamberlain), and *drung yig chen mo* (Chief Secretary).

[10] For arguments regarding the meaning of this term and its connection to the administration of imperial Tibet, see Mullard 2011: 73–78.

(rGya mtsho 'Bar spung pa), into exile in Bhutan.[11] Garwang or, more likely, his father, then led the army against Tamdin and ultimately defeated him. Following this Rabden Sharpa (Rab brtan shar pa) was, according to "The Testimony of the Barfung clan", enthroned as king of Sikkim by the Tibetan government,[12] though the authors of *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* claim that Rabden Sharpa was only a Tibetan deputed to act as regent during the minority of Namgyal Phuntshog. Whatever political role Rabden Sharpa may have held, it is clear that the actual administration of Sikkim fell to Garwang and his father as heads of the lay council.[13] Following this, though the precise date is unclear, Garwang and his father, as rulers of Sikkim brought the illegitimate king back to Sikkim, where he was enthroned.[14] The role of Garwang and his father in this period does seem to suggest that the political administration of Sikkim remained in the hands of the Barfung family, and through their control and influence over the king, reduced Namgyal Phuntshog to little more than a puppet ruler.

As Chancellor, Garwang dispossessed the allies of Tamdin of their estates and redistributed the land amongst his children: ensuring the dominance of the Barfung family in Sikkimese politics.[15] By the time of Garwang's death, sometime after 1774, his eldest son—who had been appointed governor of Barmiok ('Bar myag)—inherited his father's position as the Royal regent of Sikkim, granted the title of

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[11] Garwang wrote a testimony toward the end of his life when he was accused of abusing his position. This is preserved in parts in "The Testimony of the Barfung clan: an account of the life and times of the ancestors" (document number PD/9.5/003) in the Sikkimese Palace Archives. According to the chronology of *The History of Sikkim*, it seems likely that Garwang died sometime after the birth of the sixth king Tenzin Namgyal in 1769 (Namgyal and Dolma 1908: 45). For details of the exile of Namgyal Phuntsog, see "The Testimony of the Barfung clan: an account of the life and times of the ancestors" (PD/9.5/003). It states: "At the time of the controversy regarding whether Namgyal Phuntsog was the king's son or not my father and I took responsibility for the child [...] thereafter the king was escorted to Bhutan".

[12] *ibid.*: "Rabden Sharpa was enthroned as the Sikkimese king by the Tibetan government".

[13] *ibid.*: "Within the year, for the purpose of reuniting all the Lho pa and Lepcha, I took the leadership of the public council".

[14] *ibid.*: "Furthermore, in consultation and with help from the Bhutanese government, it was necessary to escort the prince here and as my father and I had the responsibility [for Sikkim] the prince was enthroned as the king".

[15] The allies of Tamdin included the ancestor of Lobsang Choeden, an assistant to J.C. White. This family remained without land until 1889 when Lobsang Choeden was given the estate of Lingmo for services rendered to the British.

Densap (*gdan tshab*) and ruled Sikkim until his brother Chugthub (Phyog thub) was appointed Chancellor in the 1780s. Following the Sino-Nepal War (1788–1792), Chugthub was granted estates in modern Rhenock (Ri nag)—the eastern border region between Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet—by the Tibetan government and Damzang (Dam bzang)—near modern Kalimpong—by the Bhutanese for his efforts during the war. Chugthub then retired to his estates, and the position of Chancellor was passed on to his younger brother Yug Namcha (Yug gnam lcags), who had also led the northern armies against the Gorkha during the war. The chancellorship was then passed on to Yug Namcha's youngest brother Bolhö, whose real name was Namgyal Phuntshog.

During this period we have considerable information regarding the Barfung family but when it comes to the lives of the Sikkimese kings, most documents are conspicuously silent.[16] It can be concluded that the influence of both the fifth and sixth kings was limited by the power and control exerted upon them by successive members of the Barfung family. We know, for example, that the sixth king was married to Garwang's youngest daughter and that once his heir (Tshugphü Namgyal) had reached an age (8) that the risk of infant mortality had passed, the sixth king Tenzin Namgyal (bsTan 'dzin rnam rgyal) died in mysterious circumstances aged only 24. The care of the child king, Tshugphü Namgyal, was entrusted to his maternal uncle—Chancellor Bolhö—probably as an attempt to maintain Barfung control over the Sikkimese royalty and state. However, when Tshugphü Namgyal became of age he challenged the traditional authority of his uncle and the Barfung clan, leading to the execution of Bolhö in 1826. Responding to the assassination of their paternal uncle, the sons of Yug Kunga (known as Ko tā kun dga' in Sikkimese sources)[17]—that is the

[16] It should be noted that this period in Sikkimese history is characterised by a number of difficulties, which cast considerable doubt over the traditional histories of Sikkim. Not least amongst these is the fact that there are numerous references to Namgyal Phuntshog though it is unclear whether this refers to Garwang's son (otherwise known as Bolhö) or the shadowy figure of the fifth Sikkimese king, whose legitimacy is, at the very least, doubtful. In addition the only sources that ascertain the existence of this king are the royal histories of Sikkim and the biography of Garwang, written in 1759.

[17] Ko ta here refers to the estates in Ilam. Yug is a Lepcha title meaning lord or sovereign, which was given to Lepcha aristocrats. It is unclear why his name is rendered with a dā in Nepali (which became represented in British sources as "ta") rather than a "ga", which would be closer to the Tibetan rendering of his name.

Yu-kang-ta of British sources[18] or the Ikunda/Yekunda of Nepali sources[19]—rebelled against Tshugphü Namgyal, leading an armed insurrection in western Sikkim, Darjeeling and the plains estates.

Some clarification of this family and its possessions is necessary for understanding the importance of this rebellion for the economic and political security of Sikkim. Yug Kunga (who was the elder brother of Bolhö) had fought alongside his other brothers (Yug Nam cha' and Yug Chugthub) in the Sino-Nepal War of 1788–1792 and then later in the Anglo-Gorkha War of 1814–1816. In the Sikkimese theatre of the Sino-Nepal War he was active in the regions of Nagri (Nag ri rdzong, now in the Darjeeling Hills), Ilam, and the North Bengal plains, which were his patrimonial estates.[20] Although the Gorkhas finally took the fort of Nagri in 1791, they were unable to hold it and pacify the region, so between 1792 and 1814 this region returned to the administration of Yug Kunda (Hamilton 1819: 123). A land grant to Yug Kunda on Aswin Sudi 12, V.S. 1868 (1811 AD) confirms this:

> To Yekunda, blessings, we are aware of your efforts and your honest services in our cause. Accordingly, we hereby assign you six annas in each rupee of land taxes (*wajbi malguzari*) collected in the hill and plain areas of Sikkim that you have settled. We also hereby place under your jurisdiction the gola of Dimali and the village settled with Dhimal ryots. In addition, we have granted jagir lands to 21 peons (*ardali*) to work under you day and night whenever required for our purposes. Transmit the income from fines collected for major crimes (*panchakhat*), buried treasure (*kalyanadhana*), and other sources (*undanta, gadanta, rahā, bahata*) to the royal palaces through the amali. (Translated in the Regmi Research Collection, vol. 40, 246–47)

The only change that seems to have occurred was that the tax revenue from these lands was being paid towards the Gorkha kings rather than the Sikkimese. To complicate matters further Yug Kunga had rights in 1805 to settle forest lands and then collect the taxes from those lands in

[18] See Hamilton 1819: 122–23.

[19] See for example Sharma and Tulasi 1996: 53. Here Ikunda is misrepresented as Bolhö, a mistake which has also been reproduced in Tirtha Mishra 2012.

[20] The development of the influence of the Namgyal kings in Ilam and the Terai is quite complicated and not fully understood. This being said, there was a degree of involvement with this region from the reign of the first Namgyal king, when the influence of the Hindupatti kings of Vijaypur in the hills was curtailed by Phuntshog Namgyal (Phun tshogs rnam rgyal). Since that time the Barfung family have held important positions in those regions.

Chainpur (modern Sankhuwasabha District) and parts of Vijaypur as is attested to in a document dated Jestha Sudi 4, VS. 1862 (1805 AD):

> Ikunda has been granted permission to reclaim Kalabanjar lands in Vijayapur and Chainpur with settlers procured from Tibet and India, on condition that he appropriates for himself six annas in the rupee of the additional revenue collected and transmits the balance of ten annas to the government through the Dittha. (Translated in the Regmi Research Collection, vol. 6, 154–55)

This meant that by the end of the Anglo-Gorkha War and the defining (but not demarcation) of the boundary between Nepal and Sikkim along the Mechi River, Yug Kunga was responsible for territory and tax revenue to both Sikkim (everything east of the Mechi) and Nepal (parts of Chainpur and Vijaypur as well as parts of Ilam). It was this position of dual overlordship which most likely would have worried the Sikkimese king Tshugphü Namgyal when the sons of Yug Kunga, led by Yug Drathub (Yug dGra thub), rebelled; particularly given the fact that this plains territory provided the bulk of Sikkimese tax revenue.

The tax revenue and administration of the plains estates (or *rgya gzhis*) are currently the subject of an ongoing project, and so without presuming the findings of that project it may be useful to explain the importance of this region. Since the early years of the Sikkimese state, the kings of Sikkim coveted the plains for their wealth in terms of agricultural production, trade and slaves. This desire to control the plains brought Sikkim into conflict with the Hindupati rulers of Vijaypur beginning with Harihar Sena, who ruled from 1661 to 1684 and who, according to "The Testimony of the Barfung clan", was defeated by the first Sikkimese king. Later (around 1761) the Barfung family were involved in the political intrigue of the court of Vijaypur, where they supported Buddhi Karna Rai in his coup against king Kama Datta Sen. The result was that the Barfung family had managed to acquire not only the annual tribute of Vijaypur, but also some degree of control of the plains immediately to the south of the low hills of Pankhabari (Darjeeling district).[21] Three forts were built on the hills just above the plains at (what is now) Mirik, Nagri, and Kurseong (Gar rdzong) and two trading houses were built on the banks of the Mahananda River in

[21] "The Testimony of the Barfung clan" reads: "a good relationship between the king and minister [of Vijaypur] was made, and so they fell under our authority. As such whatever annual tribute items, that were received, were recorded in the register".

the plains.[22] From these vantage points the Barfung were able to extract taxes and slaves[23] from the Rajabanshi people living on the plains and control the vital gold trade. The gold trade must have been quite important to the economy of the area as there remains a historical memory of it amongst the inhabitants of the area. According to these respondents it seems that in the past the Sonowal (a sub-tribe of the Kachari of Assam and Koch Bihar) panned for gold in the Brahmaputra River, from where they would then take the gold dust to a place near modern Salugara (close to Siliguri) on the Mahananda River. There the Lepcha would collect the gold dust from the Sonowal people and trade it in Nepal and other places.[24] Even excluding the potential wealth from this trade the tax records from the 1840s for the plains estates show that the annual tax revenue on agricultural products amounted to Rs. 26,000—a huge sum by the standards of the times. Therefore whoever controlled this region would have had immense political and economic power. In 1826 this region was the inherited estate of the Kotapa branch of the Barfung family.

THE TEXT OF THE 1830 COVENANT ON TAX EXILES AND BORDER REGIONS

Transliteration of the Covenant (PD/1.2/004)[25]

1. lcags stag zla 11 tshes 21 la_ phan bde'i 'byung gnas lugs gnyis gong ma khrim[26] bdag rin po'i zhabs drung du zhu gsol

2. zhu ba_ bdag ming rtags khungs gsham gsal nas blos blang[27] 'gyur med kyi gan

[22] The "Testimony" does seem to suggest that the control of the trading houses was not complete during this period for example: "The traders from the plains estate of 'Gying stole pigs, tobacco, cloth, etc. but they were apprehended [by the Barfung] and so Chog pa set fire to the government trading post and whatever trade goods that were there were taken by [him]".

[23] According to a respondent close to the former ruling Rikut family of Jaipalguri, the Sikkimese regularly raided Koch Bihar for slaves until the principality became a protectorate of British India in the late nineteenth century.

[24] Interview with respondent B.A. 16 May 2013.

[25] The transliteration of this text is unedited with major corrections in footnotes. The use of the underscore represents a space in the original text.

[26] khrims.

[27] blangs.

3. brgya[28] gtsang mar phul snying_ sngon du 'bras ljongs yug rnams rgyal phun tshogs zer ba nas rgyal blon bar go bab gyi bka' khrims khur shes med khar sa mtshams dkrog rkyen lta bu'i

4. byed 'dzol sna tshogs byung bar rten rnams phun zer ba rgyal po nas me khyi lo tshar gcod mdzad stab[29]_ kho pa'i nye 'brel yug dgra thub can dang khong rtogs[30] gyi khral pa 'bor

5. mi chung tsam skab[31] der 'jig skrag rkyed pa'i gor kha rgyal po'i sa khongs su yul byol la mthon bshis[32]_ mi ser de rnam[33] 'bras ljongs rang khungs su phyir log yod pa zhig thugs rje

6. che zhu'i bod gzhung Am ban lhan rgyas dang_ srid skyongs skyabs mgon rgyal tshab no mi han chen po bcas rgya bod lhan rgyas su 'bras ljongs rgyal po nas skyid rgyud gser snyan sgron tser

7. la brten_ rang khri'i sa mtshams byed sko'i zhabs 'degs su da phan thud shor med pa'i zhabs 'gyur du dgongs_ bkrin phar gzigs kyi gor kha rgyal por Am ban lhan rgyas kyi[34] bka' brgya tsal

8. ba'i me khyi lo 'bras ljongs pa'i mi ser yul byol du song ba de rnams_ 'bras ljongs rang khung[35] su phyir sprod bgyis tshe rgyal khag phan mtshun legs tshogs che ba'i bka'i khyab

9. 'dom rtsal ba de ltar la_ gor rgyal nas kyang bka' 'brel spyi khur gyi[36] 'bras ljongs mi ser yul byol pa rnam[37] phyir 'bul zhu rgyu'i snyan zhu 'bul lam zhus pa'i_ 'bras mi

10. rnams skyid grong sa mtshams nas rtsis len byed par ding ri shu sbi dang_ rgyal rtse ru dpon rdo rje dgra 'dul gnyis bka' 'brel kyi mngags rdzong[38] rkyang pa'i mi ser rnam[39] skyid grong du zla 10

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[28] rgya.
[29] stabs.
[30] Allies.
[31] skabs.
[32] bshis is a Sikkimese past tense indicator.
[33] rnams.
[34] kyis.
[35] khungs.
[36] gyis.
[37] rnams.
[38] rdzangs.
[39] rnams.

11. tshes 7 nyin rtsis len thog_ ru dpon rdo rje dgra 'dul mdun mgo pa yug dgra thug dang_ g.yog gras nu mong bla ma_ de khying rgan mthus de'u shing_ khong ma hang_ mdza' ma na

12. 'byor rgyas_ hing dkar na_ A ling_ ma chen_ bde sa brjid_ rub shing_ A dar bcas khyon sdom mi grang bcu gsum mnyam khrid thog _ zla 11 tshes 21 nyin 'bras ljongs dbang rtser rtsis sprod

13. gnang byung cing_ yul byol mi ser rnam[40] la sngon nyes byed 'dzol phran bu sems zhig gi snar bcod 'gal rkyen sogs mi zhu ba dang_ yul byol pa rnams sngon kyi sdod gnas ga phig du

14. sngar rgyun ltar zhag pa'i_ yug dgra thub gyi thab 'degs kyang ko Ta rdzong dpon rang gnas thog khos dpag zos go sngar lam ltar gnang rgyu bcas_ sngon du rgya bod lhan rgyas su gan rgya rtags can 'bul

15. lam zhus don la rgyab mdun mi tshungs[41] pa'i 'gal cha til 'bru tsam mi zhu zhus cing_ yug dgra thub can khral mi rnam nas kyang sngar byas la 'gyod sems dang_ da byed spang blang

16. gyi dpon 'bangs bar khral khrims khur shes kyi skam chung bsdong[42] mkhas zhu ba las sa mtshams phyi rol du mgo rten lugs 'gal rigs da cha rten nas mi zhu ba'i mtshon[43]_ mi khyi lo mnyams

17. mthon byas pa'i khral mi rnams 'bras ljongs rang khur su ri bong tshang log zhu rgyu'i mgo pa yug dgra thub nas gan rgya zur zur 'bul zhus nang ltar dang_ phyogs mtshungs blon rigs rnam[44] nas kyang sngar lugs

18. mig ltos shas rkyen du ma song ba'i rgyal blon go babs[45] dang bstun 'bras ljongs sa mtshams zhabs 'degs ngag bkod dang len zhu rgyu sogs la don gang spyi'i thad la rgyal blon dam gtsang gi mig

19. ltos yar mgran[46] zhu ba las sngon yug rnams phun lta bu'i bka' khrims chal rkyen su 'gro rigs drag gzhan su thad nas mi zhu ba bcas_ 'bras ljongs rgyal blon khral mi bcas

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[40] rnams.
[41] mtshungs.
[42] sdod.
[43] Prohibited.
[44] rnams.
[45] go bab.
[46] 'dren.

20. tshangs ma'i thad nas gtso bor rang khung[47] sa mtshams khag nas thud shor med pa dang_ lhag par sa mtshams phyi rol du mgo rdren[48] gyi phyi dgra nang g.yab rgyal khag phan tshun bar dkrog rkyen

21. 'gro rigs sogs blo ngan sbub tshang gyi rigs rgyal 'bangs su thad nas mi zhu zhus pa'i 'dod mthun gyi gan tshig gtsang 'bul zhus pa 'di don las mi 'gal cing_ gal srid gong tshig las

22. 'gal ba'i nga min kho yin_ kha gcig lce gnyis_ dran[49] gtam gsar skye_ ri sgul mtsho skyom_ bka' zhu dam phebs_ gken tsa[50] phyogs lang_ zhu tshem byung tshul sogs drag gzhan

23. su thad nas 'gal g.yon khra mo tsam shar tshe byed po so sor gong ma chos[51] yon gyi bka' khrims dpyad gras rkyang 'os sogs so so'i 'gal tshab la zhib pa'i zhu dgos thog_ khrims zhabs

24. rin po cher 'ba' gser srang brgya tham pa shul bcas gtsang sgrub la zhu re med pa dang_ slar yang bris dan 'di don la sor gnas brgyun khyongs su zhu zhus pa'i don mi 'gyur ba'i mched rtags phul

25. ba 'bras ljongs sa spyod gtsug phug rnam rgyal gyis phyags rtags

26. gus blon phyag rdor khral mi bcas spyi lhag bskor gyi rtags_ blon brag shar nam kha dbang 'dus khral mi bcas spyi lag

27. bskor gyi rtags rnams rdzong tshe ring rgya mtho dang khral mi bcas spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags blon tshe gsum dang khral mi bcas spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags_ sgang rdzong dpal 'byor dang khral mi spyi

28. lag bskor ba'i rtags_ yug A dum dang khral mi spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags_ blon A chung dang khral mi spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags_ blon lha brtan dang khral mi bcas spyi lag bskor ba'i

29. rtags_ shar blon phun tshogs rig 'dzin dang khral mi bcas lag bskor ba'i rtags_ zhal rdzong bsod nams dgra 'dul dang khral mi bcas spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags_ Am lam rdzong nag ril[52] dang khral

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47 khungs.

48 'dren.

49 'dran. It was brought to the attention of the author that in the phrase *dran gtam gsar skye* [*sic*: *bskyed*] the *dran gtam* (= remembered [points of a] dispute) can be found in different texts as *'gran gtam* / *'dran gtam* = objections (personal communication with Christoph Cüppers June 2013). He very kindly suggested the following translation "coming up again with these old stories of the dispute".

50 rkyen rtsa.

51 mchod.

30. mi bcas spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags_ sgo gling rdzong yar tshes dang khral mi bcas spyi lag bkor ba'i rtags_ bsam gling rdzong 'brug phun tshogs dang khral mi bcas spyi lag bkor[53] ba'i

31. rtags_ gsang[54] rdzong sgrub chen dang khral mi bcas spyi lag skor ba'i rtags_ sgar rdzong tshe ring dbang rgyal khral mi bcas spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags_ 'bar nyag rdzong 'brug rgyas dang khral mi

32. bcas spyi lag bkor[55] ba'i rtags_ zhal yang dgos spun lag bskor ba'i rtags_ mgron lha chos drung sman chung rgya dpon 'bum thub_ pho bdar bcas las tshan nang ma spyi lag bskor

33. ba'i rtags_ dmag dpon 'phris[56] bzang po_ mgo las_ dpa' shan_ hung 'bar bcas spyi lag bkor[57] ba'i rtags_ tsam dum yang bcas spyi lag bskor ba'i rtags_ rgya gzhi 'go pa ru mo_ mir

34. shing lag bskor ba'i rtags_ spyi dang gra tshang pad ma yang rtse'i dbu mdzad bde chen klong grol bcas lha bde spyi'i rtags

Translation

Submitted on the 21st day of the 11th month of the Iron Tiger year (1830) to the feet of the precious law holder who is master of the dual system which is the source of happiness and benefit. The permanent covenant has been submitted in honesty by those who have signed and sealed below. Because there arose various forms of conflict [between the king and ministers] like the agitation on the borders on account of the fact that earlier Yug Namgyal Phuntshog disregarded the law of obligation between the king and ministers, so in the Fire Dog year (1826) the king defeated the one called Namgyal Phuntshog. This resulted in our relatives Yug Drathub, his allies, taxpayers and exiles, fleeing, on account of fear, to the land under the realm of the Gorkha king for a short period.
On account of that the Sikkimese king sent a letter, regarding the returning of those *mi ser* to Sikkim, to the Chinese and Tibetan governments, the Amban and the Tibetan regent Nom-un Qan [No mi Han][58] and it was hoped that henceforth [the governments] would assist completely in protecting and maintaining the borders of the kingdom. The Amban, therefore, sent a letter to the Gorkha king regarding the repatriation of those

53 bskor.

54 bsang.

55 bskor.

56 Contraction of *'phrin las*.

57 bskor.

58 The author would like to thank Fabienne Jagou for informing him that this is a

mi ser, who had fled in the year of the Fire Dog (1826), to Sikkim as a means of maintaining the well being, prosperity and harmony between the [two] countries. Even the Gorkha king has respected and obeyed the order [of the Amban] and submitted a letter for the extradition of the Sikkimese exiles from Kyirong (sKyid grong),[59] within which [it says] that Ding Ri Subba[60] (Ding ri Shu sbi [*sic*]) and the colonel of Gyantse Dorje Dradul (rDo rje dgra 'dul), who were deputed by order, were dispatched and the unemployed *mi ser* were rounded up and sent off from Kyirong on the 7th day of the 10th month. Altogether thirteen people were gathered and escorted in front of the colonel Dorje Dradul [including]: the leader Yug Drathub, the servant Nu mong bla ma, De khying rgan mThus, De'u shing, Khong ma hang [Limbu], mDza' ma na, 'Byor rgyas, Hing dkar na [Limbu], A ling, Ma chen, bDe sa brjid (Desajit), Rub shing, A dar. On the 21st day of the 11th month the list [of these people] was submitted to the Sikkimese palace of Wandutse (dBang sdus rtse). The previous crimes of the exiled *mi ser* were forgiven and they were not punished. Instead they were located in their previous lands of Kabi (Ga phig). Even Yug Drathub was appointed to his previous position, in his ancestral estate, as governor of Kota. No violation or contradiction, no matter how small, shall be committed against the letter or spirit of the signed and sealed reconciliation document submitted earlier, to the Tibetan and Chinese governments.

Even the taxpayers of Yug Drathub regret their previous actions and from now on one must be able to remain [in their place], be competent in following the tax laws and dedicated to fostering a good relation between lord and subject; and from now onwards it is prohibited to lead [people] to the external borders as per the internal points of the agreement made by the leader, Yug Drathub, of the taxpayers who had fled in the Fire Dog year (1826) and who returned to their previous places in Sikkim, like a rabbit returning to its den. Similarly regarding whatever general concerns there may be; such as: following the oral instructions

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title of Mongol origin given by Manchu emperors to high Lamas and for her information regarding the regent at the time the covenant was composed (Fabienne Jagou personal communication). Jagou also informed the author that in this case the use of the title refers to the second Tsemonling (Tshe smon gling) regent (1819–1844), who inherited his titles from the First Tsemonling Regent (1777–1786). Prior to becoming regent he was the preceptor of the Manchu Emperor for more than ten years in Beijing. When he was appointed regent in 1777, the Emperor granted him with the title Erdeni Nomun qan (Petech 1959: 383–88).

[59] It is not clear whether Kyirong (sKyid grong) was at this time under the nominal authority of the Gorkhas, though it was certainly a region of Gorkha interest as Geoffrey Childs has shown in his study of the history of Nub ri sKyid grong was occupied in the war between Tibet and Nepal in 1855 but was returned to Tibet by Jung Bahadur after the peace agreements of 1856 (Childs 2001: 19).

[60] Dingri (Ding ri) is a town in southern Tibet close to the Sino-Nepalese border and mount Everest.

regarding the protection of Sikkim's borders and the rights and responsibilities between the king and his ministers, of which the earlier example [i.e. Yug Drathub] should not be forgotten; the high and low people cannot break those laws, like in the previous case of Yug Namgyal Phuntshog. Instead the good example, that is the sacred vow between the king and ministers, should be followed.

All of Sikkim's population including taxpayers, ministers, and royalty should not give up the protection of their own country's border regions. Especially they shall not violate the pure covenant that was made in which all the subjects of Sikkim vow not to act deceitfully by creating disturbance between different countries such as leading the external enemies inside. If one violates the abovementioned agreement and [instead of accepting the charge] blames another, is two faced, comes up again with the old stories [of the dispute], [or] is disruptive,[61] if government justice is requested [in those cases] the accused whether they be high or low, or have only slightly violated [the covenant], a full examination of the violation of the laws of the highest patron and spiritual lord [will be carried out], and each person who violates the laws must pay clearly the fine of 100 gold *srang* to the lord of the law without excuses and delays. In addition to that, seals and signatures have been submitted [as verification] that the fundamental point of this [law], which has been written, will spread in perpetuity.

The Sikkimese king (gTsug phud rnam rgyal [*sic*]).

The sign and seal of the humble minister Chagdor (Phyag rdor) together with his taxpayers.

The minister Dragshar (Brag shar [*sic*]) Namkha Wangdu (Nam mkha' dbang 'dus) together with his taxpayers (Yangthang Kazi).

The seal of the district governor of Namchi (Nam rtse [*sic*]) Tshering Gyatsho (Tshe ring rgya mtsho) together with his taxpayers.

The minister Tshesum (Tshe gsum) together with his taxpayers.

The district governor of Gangtok Paljor (dPal 'byor) together with his taxpayers.

Cheebu Lama (Yug A dum) together with his taxpayers.

Minister Achung (A chung) [of Tateng] together with his taxpayers.

The minister Lha Tenzin (Lha bstan) together with his taxpayers.

Sharlön Phuntshog Ringzin (Shar blon Phun tshogs rig 'dzin) together with his taxpayers.

The district governor of Zhey Sonam Dradul (Zhal rdzong dpon bSod nams dgra 'dul) together with his taxpayers.

Ilam and Nagri districts together with the taxpayers.

The upper part of Goling (sGo gling) district together with the taxpayers

[61] *ri sgul mtsho skyom*: literarily "shaking the mountains and disturbing the lakes".

The district governor of Samling (bSam gling), Drug Phuntshog ('Brug phun tshogs) together with his taxpayers.

The district governor of Sang (gSang [*sic*]) Drubchen (sGrub chen) together with his taxpayers.

The district governor of Kurseong (sGar [rdzong]) Tshering Wangyal (Tshe ring dbang rgyal) together with his taxpayers.

The district governor of Barmiok ('Bar nyag [*sic*]) Drugyal ('Brug rgyal) together with his taxpayers.

Anggö of Zhey (Zhal Ang dgos) and his brothers.

The sign of the manager Lhachö (lHa chos), the attendant Menchung (sMan chung), the captain Bumthub ('Bum thub), with the Phodar (tax collectors) and all the government officials.

The military officer Thinley Zangpo ('Phrin las bzang po) and Golay (mGo las), Parshan, Hungbar, and Dumyang.

The sign of the leaders of the plains estates Rumo (Ru mo) and Mishing (Mir shing).

The sign of the general witness the provost (*dbu mdzad*) of Pemayangtse (Padma g.yang rtse), Dechen Longdrol (bDe chen klong grol) with the general ecclesiastic council.

Remarks on the text

The covenant can be clearly understood as a response to the flight of Yug Drathub and his taxpayers from the jurisdiction of Sikkim, and the border issues and the international diplomatic problems that arose because of those actions, following the execution of Chancellor Bolhö in 1826. These developments are considered acts of rebellion, not only against the king, but also against the tradition of master and servants (*dpon g.yog*). This system was defined in *The Royal Genealogy of Lasso* (*La sogs rgyal rabs*) in 1657, and later ratified by the signing of the *Agreement of the three [communities of] the Bhutia, Lepcha and Limbu (lHo mon gtsong gsum gyi gan rgya)* agreement in 1663,[62] in which major clan leaders, ministers, and regional chiefs agreed to accept a single governmental authority in Sikkim, headed by the descendants of the first Sikkimese king Phuntshog Namgyal. The legitimacy of the Sikkimese kings and their rights of power and authority in Sikkim result, at least theoretically, from these two important legalistic documents. This right to rule is further legitimised by the religious narratives prophesising the first king as an incarnate dharmarāja. Of course the actual political reality of 1820s Sikkim was probably a more important factor for Yug Drathub, than the legal and religious precedents of

[62] For details see Mullard 2011: 140–47 and 240–45.

the seventeenth century. Yug Drathub, in all likelihood, saw himself as the successor to his uncle Bolhö. Whereas the king Tsugphü Namgyal interpreted the assassination of Bolhö as a legitimate act as Bolhö acted against the system of master and servants: a system which defines the legitimacy of the Namgyal dynasty. Indeed the text is clear that the execution of Bolhö was justified. Therefore, the response of Yug Drathub can only be understood as an act of rebellion against the king's rule and hence the necessity for the above covenant. Essentially the covenant, by the fact that it is signed by the aristocrats, elite, and officials of the Sikkimese state, legalises the action of the king in removing his uncle, Bolhö, from the position of Chancellor.

Whilst that is an important aspect of the function of the covenant, the document is more than just an act of legitimisation. It is ultimately dealing with three issues of great concern to any state: the tax base of the kingdom, territory, and loyalty. A brief summary of the document's main points may help to clarify this further. The majority of the document is a statement of facts, presented in a narrative form which displays the magnanimous qualities of the king. That is: Yug Drathub rebelled and removed himself and tax-paying subjects from Sikkim; the king (using international diplomatic channels) had the rebels returned to Sikkim to face the king's justice; instead the king forgave them and allowed them to return to their estates, having made them swear an oath of loyalty; the rebels regretted their actions and agreed to abide by the tax laws of Sikkim and accept the master-servant relationship. The question is then why did the king go through all that trouble only to forgive the crimes? Why did he not simply execute Yug Drathub as he had his uncle?

It could be that the rebellion of Yug Drathub took the king by surprise and simply executing him may have led to more significant problems such as a large-scale rebellion of the Kota estates of Darjeeling, Antu (now part of Ilam but only defined as such in 1835), and the plains estates (the region east of the Mechi River, west of the Tista and north of Purnea District of North-West Bengal). As noted earlier, this territory accounted for the bulk of Sikkim's tax revenue during this period. For example in tax revenue receipts from 1846 (SPA document number PD/1.1/040) of the estates in the Ranibum, Naxalbhari, Kharibari, and Gosaipur areas amounted to a net income (before deductions for expenditure, salaries and purchase of trade goods) in excess of Rs 26,000, equivalent to approximately Rs 32 million today (when calculated on

the basis of nominal GDP inflation).[63] As such the potential loss of revenue would have alarmed the king. This apprehension is further reflected in the text itself, particularly with regard to the status of runaway taxpayers and the narrations of the king's efforts in having them returned to Sikkim. Indeed the removal of tax-paying subjects from the kingdom was so unacceptable that it is specifically outlawed in the covenant above, in which it is stated: "from now onwards it is prohibited to lead [people] to the external borders". It is, of course, a legitimate concern for a state to have given that the tax revenue of the state largely depends upon common people remaining in their fields producing agricultural yield which the state in turn extracts as taxation. A reduction in commoners, resulting from escape to country where it was difficult to have them returned, would have led to a reduction in tax revenue.

The second fear the covenant addresses is that of territory. For example the text proclaims: "All of Sikkim's population including commoners, ministers, and royalty should not give up the protection of their own country's border regions". In the decades prior to the signing of the covenant, Sikkim had a very uneasy relationship with its western neighbour, Nepal. Sikkim was involved in three major wars with the Gorkhas. The first was in 1771–1774 during the Gorkha-Limbu War on account of the expansion of the Gorkhas into the regions east of the Arun River, which were considered by Sikkim to be vassals.[64] This war culminated in the third Battle of Chainpur in 1774. The second major conflict was the Sino-Nepal War which saw the invasion and occupation of the Sikkimese capital and the flight of the young king, Tsugphü Namgyal, to Tibet. The third and most recent was the Anglo-Gorkha War of 1814–1816 (1817) and resulted in Sikkim recapturing the plains estates. On account of this history of conflict with the Gorkha state, the flight of Yug Drathub to Nepal was a serious concern to the Sikkimese,

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[63] To put this into context, the annual value of trade through Natu-la is currently around Rs. 16 million. Nominal GDP inflation can be quite a useful method for assessing the value of the rupee in the mid-nineteenth century rather than calculating the silver value of the rupee, as the rupee lost a significant amount of its value in the silver crisis of 1871–1893 as a silver-standard currency. All the palace records regarding taxation of the plains estates are currently in the process of being published.

[64] The extent to which Sikkim actually controlled this region is open to speculation. However, it is recorded in a number of Sikkimese sources that Sikkim's involvement in eastern Nepal dates from the expulsion of the Makwani kings from the region which now straddles western Sikkim and eastern Nepal, in the 1650s and 1660s. The Makwani kings were the rulers of Vijaypur in Morang.

who had little faith in Nepal to return Sikkimese subjects unconditionally and even less trust in Nepal to remain militarily neutral should events deteriorate. Ultimately the relationship between Yug Drathub and the king did, indeed, deteriorate and after 1830 Nepal was no longer a neutral observer of events but an active participant. For example several land grants had already been issued to Yug Drathub by the Gorkha prior to 1830 for a number of settlements in Ilam:

> Shri Durgajyu
> Injunction by his Majesty
>
> Kazi Yukla Thup [*sic*] shall be granted under the district of Morung, Taluk Illam, the barren and non arable land right from Birgan River in the east, from the hills to Temey River in the south to the boundary of Baisavada in the west and north and within the jurisdiction of Madanpur under his administration. For the purpose of developing the land and habitations he can bring the people from India and Tibet and shall with sincere allegiance and after making due payment of revenue to the new Shri Nath company. Administer and reap the benefit!
> Samvat 1885 (1827), dated Vaisakh 7th *roj* (day) 2. (Bajracharya and Shrestha 1978: 42–43)[65]

Of course at the time the covenant was signed, the final rebellion had not taken place and it is difficult to know what the true intentions of both Yug Drathub and the Sikkimese king were. The above document certainly give the impression that Yug Drathub, at the very least, had the possibility, if not intention, to escape to Ilam should hostilities resume. Similarly, given that there had been a conflict between the Sikkimese king and Yug Drathub for the preceding four years, it seems inconceivable that Tsugphü Namgyal would have been so naïve as to abandon preparations in case the reconciliation did not hold. It is probably for this reason, in combination with the fact that Yug Drathub possessed tax-estates in eastern Nepal, that the covenant is so explicit regarding the protection of Sikkim's border regions with Nepal. This is particularly important given that the Nepal-Sikkim border was not clearly demarcated. Indeed the frontier region was politically complicated. As mentioned above the ability of the states of both Sikkim and Nepal to impose authority on this region was hampered by local leaders, such as Yug Drathub, who collected and paid revenue to both

[65] Translated from "Sikkim Ka *Kazi* Yuklathupko Nepalma Saran" [The political asylum of Kazi Yuklathup in Nepal].

Sikkim and Nepal (as attested to by the land-grants above). These local leaders were connected to a complex matrix of power and authority, defined, as it was, by shifting loyalties to both states.[66] As such the covenant is, perhaps, an attempt by the state to gain some measure of control over this complicated region, through the embryonic idea of linking territory with sovereignty.

The third issue is that of loyalty. The covenant is ultimately that: a promise, a pledge, and an oath on the part of the signatories to remain in loyal service to the king. The covenant binds the signatories to the king specifically through the vow to uphold the master-servant relationship. It is important, therefore, to examine the signatories in more detail, as by identifying who did and who did not sign the covenant it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding the motivation of the king to bind these specific figures to his rule.

The most striking omission in the signatory section of the document is that of the principal culprit Yug Drathub himself. Whilst it is true that some of the estates under Yug Drathub are mentioned (such as Ilam, Nagri, Kurseong, and the plains estates), the actual signatories of those regions are, when a name and title are in fact mentioned, of the governor or headman rank (*rdzong dpon* and *sgo pa*), and so do not refer to Yug Drathub. Instead they refer to (possibly) his subordinates, or the estate managers and tax collectors of the regions in question. Of course there could be many reasons why the lower ranking officials were bound by oath to the king. However, it is also possible that the choice of signatories was deliberate—using the reconciliation between the king and Yug Drathub as an excuse to bind in loyalty those leaders, who were traditionally subordinate to Yug Drathub, directly to the king Tsugphü Namgyal instead, and thus cutting Yug Drathub from his power base. It has been mentioned elsewhere (Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 6–10) that a similar method was used to divide the Barfung clan at this time: tying certain branches of this clan to the fortunes of Tsugphü Namgyal. Similarly, a glance at the remaining signatories seems to confirm this practice of divide and rule.

[66] A similar situation existed on the Nepal-Bihar border, wherein local rulers often remained largely independent of both British and Gorkha state dynamics, through dual tax obligations to both states (see Michael 2012 for details). Whilst this situation was politically solved with the Anglo-Gorkha War, the legacy of this situation still exists in the form of the Madeshi movement for autonomy in the Nepalese Terai.

Interestingly, and not without deliberate intention, many of the signatories are, if not direct members of, at least related to, the Barfung clan through marriage alliances or historical connections (see the simplified genealogy of the Barfung clan below). The first signatory, following the king, was Chagdor Khangsarpa (Phyag rdor Khang gsar pa). The Khangsar family (who allegedly descend from an ancient Lepcha chief called Hungbar of the Khatak clan)[67] play an important role in later Sikkimese history,[68] but the family's ascent in Sikkimese politics stems from the reign of Tsugphü Namgyal. It was, according to *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs*, Chagdor who ensured the survival of Tsugphü Namgyal during the Gorkha invasion of Sikkim. He was also involved in the assassination of Bolhö in 1826, and therefore a natural ally to the king.

The second signatory is from the Thakarpa[69] (Brag dkar pa) family of the Yangthang (gYang thang) Kazis. Though the title given in this text is Brag shar, indicating the Sharlön (Shar blon) family of modern Biksthang in western Sikkim, it is clearly referring to the Brag dkar pa minister as in 1830 there was no Namkha Wangdu (Nam mkha' dbang 'dus) from the Sharlön family. The Sharlön is in fact recorded later in the list of signatories as Phuntshog Ringzin (Phun tshogs rig 'dzin), who was the son of Minister Dondrub (bKa' blon Don sgrub), meaning that the Namkha Wangdu in the text above can be none other than the Yangthang Kazi of that time. His son married into the Barfung clan by becoming an in-marrying son-in-law (*mag pa*) to the daughter of Yug Chugthub.

The origins of the next two signatories are not clear. When I was conducting fieldwork in Namchi (gNam rtse) in 2013, a number of local informants suggested to me that the governor of Namchi was not a hereditary position, and that the post was instead appointed directly by the king from members of different families (though by the twentieth century it fell under the administration of Newar contractors or *ṭhekadars*). This is similar to the account given by Risley (1894: 35), though it is unsure whether the local accounts are part of an older oral

[67] See *The History of Sikkim*: genealogical appendix: 4.

[68] Their role is generally considered a negative one, involving direct disloyalty to the Sikkimese kings. Firstly during the reign of Thuthob Namgyal and then later during the chaos of the 1970s.

tradition or have been affected by the widespread availability of *The Gazetteer of Sikhim* [*sic*].

The governor of Gangtok (sGang tog rdzong dpon) was a subordinate member of the Barfung clan, whereas Yug A dum is none other than the Cheebu Lama, mentioned in *The History of Sikkim*. The Cheebu Lama is related to the 'Bar myag branch of the Barfung through his elder sister, who married the district governor of Zhey (Zhal rdzong dpon or the Shew Jongpon of English sources) Sonam Dradul (bSod rnam dgra 'dul). To add further to the confusion of Cheebu Lama's connections with the Barfung, his nephew's wife was also a Barfungpa from the Tateng (bKra steng) line and she later had an incestuous affair with her cousin the Enchey (dBen can) Kazi. She was also the sister of A chung who is found as a signatory above.

The next signatory is Lha Tenzin (lHa bstan 'dzin), who was the Lasso Kazi (in Sikkim Lasso is confusingly rendered as La sogs). The Lasso line is considered to be one of the few Bhutia (lHo po) aristocratic families in Sikkim, based on patrilinial descent. However, Lha Tenzin was in fact the bastard son of Kota Kunga and so had a claim to his father's estates in Ilam, Darjeeling, Nag ri and the plains estates should the current lord (Yug Drathub) fall out of favour.[70] As the district governor of Zhey and the minister of Shar have been discussed above we can move on to Sang (bSang). The family of Sang are also of the Barfung clan but they come from a different line from that of Garwang and his descendants. Whereas Garwang's line descends from Tensung Namgyal's (bsTan srung rnam rgyal) illegitimate son Yugthing Arub (Yug mthing A rub), the Sang line originates in Arub's mother's legitimate children; that is, the true sons of Tasa Aphong (rTa sa A phong) and Nambong (Nam bong).[71] The remaining signatories are mainly officials. They include tax revenue officials such as Gyapon (*brgya dpon*) and *Poddar* (a sub-group of the Agarwal community of India which migrated to Bihar and West Bengal for trade and administrative purposes during the British period), as well as representatives of the plains estates and representatives of the monastic community.

Given that the signatory section is by no means a complete list of all Sikkimese aristocratic and other powerful and elite leaders, the choice of officials was, most likely, deliberate. As has been shown above many of the signatories were connected to Yug Drathub, either as relatives

[69] This is how the current family spells their surname in English.

(both blood and marriage) or as political associates and so binding these people to the Sikkimese king through an oath of loyalty is clearly a significant political act. It appears, therefore, that the king is attempting to isolate Yug Drathub from his natural allies, his family, his tax collectors and his political connections. If that is indeed the case, which seems most likely given the historical context, this document represents a negotiation of power. That is, the covenant legitimises the master-servant relationship, by the assertion that the Kotapa rebellion was essentially illegal and the fact that the signatories have sworn an oath for the protection of that relationship indicates a level of agreement with that assertion by the signatories. Whilst of course oaths are almost as often broken as they are made, the actual act of bringing and binding people to a vow is still a demonstration of power, irrespective of whether the signatories keep their oath or not. The symbolic significance of the act itself cannot be underestimated. That alone makes it a very important event as the king was able to bring together people, who were not necessarily his natural allies, and make them swear an oath and sign the covenant dealing with the three main concerns of the king: maintenance of tax revenue laws, territorial security, and loyalty to the king and state.

These three issues of concern all ultimately relate back to the preservation of tax revenue. If, for example, the tax laws were ignored there would be an obvious decrease in tax revenue. Similarly, if territorial security decreased there was the real possibility that taxes would be lost to a neighbouring or new state, and if there were no contract of loyalty (or at least acceptance of the system and the position of the king) the economic revenue of both the elite and the state would be threatened by potential conflict. Stability of administration is in the long-term economic interests of both the state and the elite, and this has been recognised by the signatories of the covenant: their political connections or family loyalty to Yug Drathub are overshadowed by their economic interests. Since the interests of the state and the elite converge the covenant essentially represents the administration of Sikkim through contract and agreement.

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[70] Incidentally it was Lasso Kazi who was appointed to Darjeeling in 1835 as the first Sikkimese representative (known in British sources as Vakil), and who became responsible for tax collection from the plains estates.

[71] Lepcha names are often not consistently transliterated into Tibetan in documents from Sikkim.

CONCLUSION

Whilst the 1830 Covenant is ultimately tied to the recapture of runaways during the Kotapa episode in Sikkimese history, this document also provides a degree of insight into the relationships of power in Sikkim. This covenant can be read as both a political tool—designed to divide the power of the leading aristocratic family of Sikkim—and a legal act, in which certain laws regarding tax rules, territorial security, and loyalty to the state and country are enacted. The laws are ultimately a reaction to the events of the Kotapa rebellion, with the objectives of preventing the loss of tax revenue from tax exiles, international interference from Sikkim's long-time enemy, and maintaining the territorial integrity of the state. The fact that this document was written during the Kotapa rebellion further confirms these points: when the historical context of the Kota branch of the Barfung clan is examined, it is clear that the outcomes of this dispute could have had potentially serious consequences for Sikkim's tax revenue (dependent as it was on the plains estates controlled by the Kota family) and territory (if the Kota family had been successful in seceding from Sikkim).

This paper has also raised some questions regarding how best to understand the regions of the plains and the Sikkim-Nepal borderlands. In particular the fact that Yug Drathub had tax responsibilities to both the kings of Sikkim and Nepal seems to suggest that an alternative approach, that addresses a regional perspective rather than a state-centric analysis, is relevant for the study of the history of the region. Given that the frontier regions were defined by a situation in which the leaders were simultaneously tied, if only theoretically, to the states of the area, this covenant could also be read as the attempt of one of those states to impose order (and one could argue sovereignty) on an area that lacked a definite demarcation of state authority.

Whilst the covenant is indeed a political tool and a legal act it is also something more subtle. It is not just the imposition of the king's wishes upon his lords and officials. It is a negotiation, an agreement, and a contract where the material interests of both the state and the elite converge. It preserves the political stability in the relationship between the royalty and the elite.

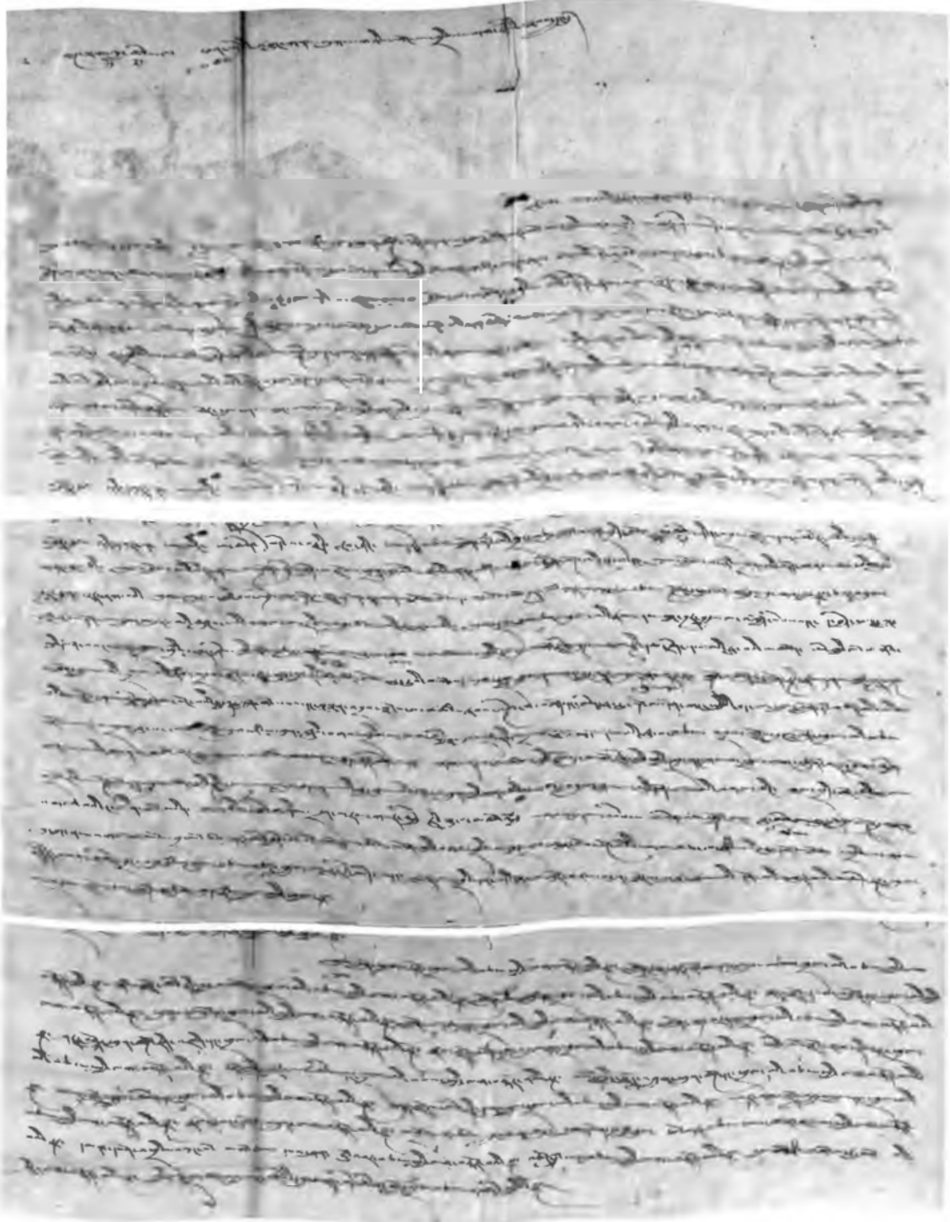


Figure 1: The Covenant (PD/1.2/004)

Simplified Genealogy of the Barfung Clan

Tasa Aphong ↔ Nambong = Tensung Namgyal

Sang Kazi Line

⌂ Yugthing A rub

Dzom Tashi

Yug Gyatso

Garwang Barfungpa

Densapa Branch

Athing po

Yug Chogthub

Athing Yongda (Gangtok)

Barmiok Kazis

○ ? ↔ ◊ Yangthang

Enchay Kazis

Rumtek Kazis

Tateng Kazis

? Generations

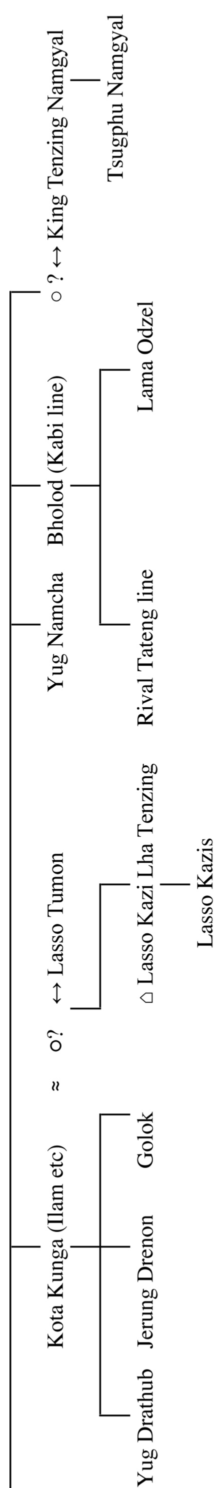
Barmiok Kazi line

Zhal line

Gyurme Tenzing = ○ ? ↔ of CL Δ

A chung

Sonam Dradul ↔ sister of CL



KEY

- ◇ In-marrying son-in-law
- ↔ Marriage
- ≈ Extra-marital relationship
- ⌂ Illegitimate child
- □ Known male
- □? Unknown male
- ○ ? Unknown female
- CL Cheebu Lama
- Δ Nephew

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WHO WERE THE SPONSORS? REFLECTIONS ON RECRUITMENT AND RITUAL ECONOMY IN THREE HIMALAYAN VILLAGE MONASTERIES

ASTRID HOVDEN

INTRODUCTION

The one who performs prostrations and makes offerings,
is the shrine keeper, Dusum Sangye.

The ones who perform the more extensive rituals,
are the assembly of monks from our own village.

The ones who provide food supplies to the monastery,
are the groups of men from our own village.

The ones who provide firewood to the monastery,
are the groups of women from our own village.[1]

Across the Tibetan Buddhist world there has been a variety of monastic institutions, and the way the monastic economy has been organised has varied correspondingly. This paper will focus on the "local" or "village" monastery, which has been the least studied, but by far the most prevalent monastic institution.[2] More specifically I will look at the patronage of the monasteries in Limi (Sle mi), a community consisting of three villages situated along a tributary to the Karnali River in the northwestern corner of Nepal. Each village has a monastery belonging to the Drigung Kagyu ('Bri gung bKa' rgyud) school of Tibetan Buddhism. This paper will focus mainly on the eleventh century Rinchenling (Rin chen gling) in Halji (dBal rtse), but the histories of the three are closely intertwined.[3]

[1] Excerpt from a song called "*The village prayer*" (*Yul gi ma ni*) sung in Limi during harvest.

[2] I use the term "village monastery" as largely synonymous with "local monastery" as defined by Kværne (1977: 87–88). See also Ström 2001: 85ff.

[3] Tilchen monastery (Til chen dgon) in Dzang (mDzang), and Til Kundzom (Til

The monasteries have been dependent on the laity for funding, and the villagers have provided labour, provisions, and goods, as described in the song cited above. In return the monasteries have fulfilled a wide spectrum of functions, the most important of which include the performance of a set of elaborate rituals in order to protect the village and its inhabitants from misfortune. The relations between monastery and villagers are complex and include several levels of reciprocity, but this paper will focus mainly on some of the economic aspects.[4]

My account will be based partly on administrative documents and partly on interviews and observations of village life.[5] The administrative and historical documents include *Rinchenling taxation register* (1952), *Rinchenling monastery inventory* (1870), *Rinchenling list of ritual expenses* (1935?), and *The Drigung history of Kailash* (1896).[6] Although significant changes have taken place in the century that has passed since the documents were composed, the documents are still in use and on the local level, the organisation of monastic patronage has remained largely the same. These local and regional documents offer a fairly good insight into how the monastic economy was organised at the margins of the Tibetan state, but tend to be lacking as far as the perspective of the common laypeople is concerned. Moreover, the administrative documents are mainly registers meant for internal usage and contain few explanations. I will therefore supplement my account with ethnographic material. This helps me include some observations about the contributions of women, who have been almost invisible in the documents, but constitute the backbone of the agro-pastoral economy in Limi.[7] In order to provide the necessary background, I will start with an

Kun 'dzom) in Til were both founded in the early thirteenth century. The name of the monastery in Dzang was was later changed to 'Phel rgyas gling.

4 I will provide a more balanced account in my Ph.D. thesis.

5 The material was collected during twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork in Limi conducted as part of my Ph.D. research in the period 2010–2012. The ethnographic fieldwork involved a combination of interviews with monks and laypeople, my own observations of activities in the monastery and village over the course of twelve months, and the collection of various written documents and oral literature.

6 The full titles of the documents are provided in the list of references below. A note should be made regarding the dates of the documents. The dates refer to the year when the documents were copied, but the documents contain many later addenda and the handwriting clearly belongs to different scribes.

7 Women's role in sustaining monastic institutions has rarely been taken into proper account, neither in the archival documents, nor in historians' descriptions, but the accounts by Gutschow (2004) and Grimshaw (1994) are important exceptions.

account of the initial patronage of the monasteries which, according to historical documents, was the initiative of kings and religious masters. But whereas the royal benefactors must have provided important support, the real sponsors were the local villagers, who were made to support the institutions through recruitment and a number of taxes. The main objective of the paper will be to describe how the rules for recruitment and funding of the monastic institutions have been organised in Limi since the end of the nineteenth century and thus try to shed some light on patronage from the villagers' point of view.

The location of Limi

Today Limi forms a VDC in the upper Humla District of Nepal, but the political history of this frontier region has been less straightforward.[8] Documents show that Limi has been regarded as located on Mon territory[9] from at least the thirteenth century onwards and this has been reflected in the practice of paying "land tax" (*sa khral*) to the various kingdoms ruling in Western Nepal. Yet, the people have been regarded as Tibetan and have paid "people's tax" (*mi khral*) to the administration in Purang as well as taxes to three of the monasteries in the Ngari (mNga' ris) region. The former kingdoms in Ngari came under Central Tibetan administration after the fall of the Guge (Gu ge) kingdom in the seventeenth century, whereas Limi and other areas that had been ruled by the former Jumla kingdom were incorporated into Nepal after the military expansion of the Gorkhas at the end of the eighteenth century. Limi maintained strong relations with the Tibetan administrations and monasteries, and a system of dual (or perhaps rather multiple) taxation continued until the Sino-Nepali border treaty of 1961 (Goldstein 1974: 261).

Limi, being a small community, has had little say in the wider geopolitics of the area and would generally have to comply when powerful rulers of the neighbouring kingdoms have demanded taxes and tributes. But local documents and oral tradition also tell about occasional acts of resistance and avoidance, and the villagers in Limi have

[8] For examples from other parts of Humla and Western Tibet, see Levine (1987, 1988, and 1992).

[9] The term *Mon* has been used in Tibetan sources to designate the lands on the southern border of the Tibetan plateau. In this particular case it refers to the territory in contemporary northwestern Nepal that was ruled by the Khas Malla kings and later the Kalyal kings. See for instance Tucci 1956.

protected their own internal government carefully. Each village has been governed by a secular village assembly presided over by local headmen (*spyi khyab* and *mgo pa*),[10] whereas the monasteries have been governed by a monastic administration.[11] Although formally affiliated with Gyangdrag (rGyang grags) Monastery in Ngari, the monasteries recruited from only the three Limi villages and the administrative posts rotated among the local monks according to seniority.

From royal to village patronage

At some time in the first half of the eleventh century, a two-storey Vairocana (rNam par snang mdzad) statue was erected in Halji, and a temple was built to house it. Local and regional tradition claim that the temple was founded by the translator Rinchen Zangpo (Lo tswa ba Rin chen bzang po, 958–1055), famous for his role in the second dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet.[12] The building of the Vairocana statue must have been a costly affair and whether carried out at the initiative of Rinchen Zangpo or not, it must have been sponsored by a wealthy patron. Rinchenling was initially only a temple and we know little about how and when it was developed into a monastic institution. The Drigung Kagyu sources are silent about it. Perhaps because the temple was Sakya in the early period, or perhaps, as some of the villagers claim, because the extension of the temple into a monastery was not carried out at the order and patronage of a king, but rather at the villagers' own initiative.

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[10] Today, the three villages in Limi form one VDC, and are becoming increasingly integrated into the Nepali political system. However, they retain a high degree of autonomy, and the internal management of the villages continues in much the same way as in the past.

[11] The administrative leader was entitled *sbug pa*, whereas the religious leader would be the Limi *sprul sku*. The *sbug pa* position and all the other monk offices would rotate according to seniority among the monks from the three villages. In the periods without a *sprul sku* or when the *sprul sku* was not resident, the most senior local monks would function as head lama of the monastery.

[12] The *Rinchenling monastery inventory* folio 11a states that the temple was built by the translator. Similarly, *The register of the three silver brothers* (1996: 22) and, according to Vitali (1996: 268, n. 405), the *Kho char dkar chag* list Limi among the temples constructed by Rinchen Zangpo. Since the temple is not mentioned in the translator's biographies, Vitali (*ibid.*) warns us that the inclusion of Limi in the Purang scriptures may be due to regional favouritism. Be that as it may, the temple is confirmed to date from the same period by C-14 testing of the wooden base of the statue.

The sources are more informative about the two other monasteries in the valley, which were Drigung Kagyu from the start. In the early thirteenth century, different Buddhist schools patronised by rival kings were establishing their footholds in the Kailash area. The Drigung Kagyupas founded Gyangdrag Monastery at the foot of Mount Kailash and sent a large number of meditators and masters to their new stronghold (*Drigung history of Kailash*: 494). Limi's location in a shielded valley in the proximity of the sacred mountain attracted a number of famous masters to its many hermitages and meditation caves. The visit of one of these, Drigung Chengalingpa ('Bri gung sPyan snga gling pa)[13] turned out to have important consequences for the villagers.

How the villagers became sponsors

The story is recorded in various sources. Here I will quote the *Rinchenling monastery inventory*, which was first written in 1690 at the order of the Drigung Vajraholder of Kailash.[14] Drigung Chengalingpa was a close disciple of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgön (sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon, 1143–1217), the founder of the Drigung Kagyu order of Buddhism. After the passing away of his lama, Chengalingpa went on a pilgrimage to the Kailash area where he would stay for seven years (1219–1225). On one occasion, the document tells us, Chengalingpa met Kracalla,[15] king of Jumla, at the shores of Lake Manasarovar. The king spoke with Chengalingpa through a translator and became so impressed that he took him as his root lama and became a great patron and supporter of the Drigung School. The king subsequently invited Chengalingpa to his capital at Yatse (Ya rtse/Ya tshe)[16] in a golden palanquin (*gser gyi mdo li*) and showered him with precious gifts

[13] Also referred to as dBon Shes rab 'byung gnas (1187–1241).

[14] The story is also mentioned in *Drigung history of Kailash* (494–95) and in *The biography of Chengalingpa*.

[15] Referred to as Grags pa lde in Tibetan sources. See for instance Petech (2003: 35) and Vitali (2003: 74).

[16] Ya rtse was conquered by the Gu ge king Nāga lde (Nāgarāja) in the first quarter of the 12th century (Vitali 2003: 68). According to Petech (2003: 34f) his successor bTsan phyug lde established his residence at Ya rtse and made it capital of the Khas Malla kingdom of Jumla ('Dzum lang) which flourished until the fourteenth century. Limi was under the king of Ya rtse in this period, but had close relations with the bordering Pu rang/Gu ge. For more insight into the complicated history of the kingdoms at Ya rtse, Gu ge, and Pu rang see Petech (2003), Vitali (1996), and Tucci (1956: 116), who identified Ya rtse with Sinja/Seṃjā in the contemporary Jumla District of Nepal.

(*Drigung history of Kailash*: 495). The *Rinchenling monastery inventory* records that:

> Out of reverence to [Chengalingpa's] prophesy, [the king and his two sons] bestowed the Limi valley Tilchen[17] estate in Dzang, the Kundzom monastery in Til, a lama's estate with individual property rights, and lay sponsors. Whatever resources[18] the individual [sponsors] would provide could be collected unhindered for however long. By obtaining these orders and regulations[19] by the king and his two sons, [the two monasteries] became branch monasteries of Tise Gyangdrag monastery.[20]

This story about the conversion of King Kracalla is very important for the Drigung Kagyupas, who were able to expand greatly after forming an alliance with the king.[21] From the perspective of the villagers in Limi, the donation of land, establishment of a lama's estate, with lay sponsors and the authority to collect taxes would have very important consequences, in both religious and economic terms. The king was reportedly generous, but the greatest expenses were to be paid by the villagers, who from now on constituted the basis of the monasteries' economy. The sources do not say anything about how the order of the king was received in the local communities, and we do not know how the patronage was organised at the time. What we do know is that during the following centuries the villagers strengthened and enlarged their monasteries and made them integrated parts of the local community. But the sponsoring of three monasteries in a valley of only a few hundred inhabitants cannot always have been easy; especially in view of the fact that the villagers were also paying taxes to kings as well as to other monasteries in the region.

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[17] Til chung in the original, but this must be a slip of the pen.

[18] *rnyed skur* can be translated as "riches and honour", but here I have opted for a simpler version.

[19] *bcad can* also be translated as "taxes" or "interest" and this is most likely what the king's donation of land to the monasteries meant for the villages.

[20] Tentative translation of *Rinchenling monastery inventory* folio 3b–4a: *Lung bstan pa dang bcas [cas] kyi gus 'dud du sle mi yul 'dzang du gnas gzhi til chen [chung]/_ stil du kun 'dzom dgon dang_bla brang sa yul bdag thob dang mchod gzhis yon bdag so so'i rnyed bkur [rnyed skur] gang bgyis sdud len [sdu len] sogs ji srid bar 'gog med du/_rgyal po yab sras gsum gyi bka' gi gnang ba rgyas bcad du thob pas _ti se rgyang grags dgon gyi ya gyal dang khongs su 'thubs pa.*

[21] Chengalingpa's missionary activities during his pilgrimage seem to have been quite successful. *The Drigung history of Kailash* (495) praises the Jumla king for the spread of the teaching to the southern lands of Mon and records that Chengalingpa formed alliances also with other regional kings and managed to secure a large number of monasteries and hermitages into the Drigung fold.

Escaping the taxes of the five Mon brothers

By the fifteenth century, the former kingdom of Jumla had fragmented, and the region was ruled by petty Kalyal kings, referred to as the five Mon brothers (Mon rong spun lnga) in local sources. Levine (1988: 25f) notes that the rule of the Kalyal kings seems to have been characterised by "great instability" for the Tibetan communities in Humla. Limi's isolated location would often save the villagers from day to day exploitation by more powerful neighbours, but tax collectors and creditors would still find their way to the villages. Contrary to their predecessors, the Kalyal kings reportedly had little sympathy for the Buddhist population and were notorious for their harsh rule and heavy taxation.[22] The fifteenth century seems to have been a particularly difficult time period and at one point, the villagers in Limi took a very drastic step to escape the taxes. The story is briefly described in the *Rinchenling monastery inventory*:

> Because of the severe oppression caused by the five Mon brothers' heavy taxation[23] the villagers supporting the Drigung Dzang Tilchen Monastery abandoned their houses and dispersed. They were not able to provide the extensive provisions to support[24] the monastery, lama, and monks [and] therefore [decided to] move the shrine objects[25] [and] all the monastic property of the Dzang Tilchen Monastery to the Halji Temple.[26]

According to this account, the villagers left their houses and seem to have become "tax refugees". Throughout Tibetan history, fleeing has not been an uncommon strategy to escape heavy taxes. In this particular case, since there are no memories of Dzang village having been abandoned and the descendants of the first settlers still live there, the

[22] Levine (1987: 78f) records that during the Kalyal period it was relatively common that antagonistic petty kings levied taxes on the same populations in Humla.

[23] *khrims* can also mean "taxation laws" or refer to both "taxation and laws", but in this context I found the simpler translation more probable.

[24] *'khra* literally means "to prop oneself up on the elbows".

[25] Literally "the three supports", representatives of Buddha's body, speech, and mind.

[26] Partial translation of Rinchenling inventory, folio 4a: *De rjes rang re 'bri gung pa'i 'dzin bdag 'dzang gi til chen dgon pa'i mi sde zhabs 'degs pa rnams mon rong spun lnga pa'i khral khrims gyi mnar spyod che ba'i bud stongs thor zhig du song shis _ dgon gnas bla grwa rnams la gzan rgyag ches pa'i 'khra tshugs ['khra' tshugs] ma thub nas/_rten [brten] gsum mchod cha rnams dbal rtse'i lha khang du gdan drangs pa bcas.*

villagers must have left their houses only temporarily. Unfortunately the inventory does not provide any more information, but the strategy presumably worked. The transfer of property to Halji, which had become Drigung at the time, and the merging of the monasteries must have relieved the economic burden on the sponsoring villagers.[27] It is worth noting that the villagers decided not to let their monastic institution be abandoned, but instead they secured its future sustenance by merging with Rinchenling monastery in Halji.[28]

THE VILLAGERS' SUSTENANCE OF THE MONASTIC ECONOMY

In the nineteenth century, the monks from the three monasteries still convened in the Rinchenling monastery in Halji.[29] The period is relatively well documented in the local archives, and the remaining part of the paper will be devoted to a description of what the sponsorship of the monasteries actually involved from this time onwards. Accounts of Tibetan monastic economies show a variety of sources of income both within and among the different institutions. Whereas larger monasteries or monasteries with important lamas would often have a broad economic base, the sponsoring of Rinchenling monastery in Halji was predominantly a local affair. The monastery was sustained by a combination of taxes collected by the monastery itself, rotational sponsorship, and voluntary sponsorship.[30] Here I have chosen to focus mainly on the monastic taxes or obligations (*dgon pa'i khral*),[31] which can be grouped

[27] Rinchenling in Halji had originally belonged to Sakya (Sa skya), but by this time, the monastery had been given over to the Drigungpas. The story is described in *Rinchenling monastery inventory*, folio 4a.

[28] Rinchenling served all three villages until the 1980s when the monasteries again split after a bitter strife about the monastic economy.

[29] Whereas the monks would assemble in the monastery in Halji, caretaker monks would look after the shrines and perform daily supplication rituals in Dzang and Til. The monks from Rinchenling would visit the other two monasteries at the occasion of larger rituals, such as the Sa ga zla ba celebration in Til Kun 'dzom Monastery.

[30] Tsarong's (1987) study of the economy of an anonymised Drigung monastery in Ladakh is a particularly interesting case for comparison because of the monastery's similar size and school affiliation. See also Gutschow's (2004) account from Zangskar and Jahoda's (2007) study of the patronage of Tabo monastery in Spiti.

[31] Because of its connotations, the word "tax" may not always be the most appropriate English rendering of *khral*. Cassinelli and Ekvall (1969: 233) pointed out in theirtheir study of the Sakya Principality that the word khral has a range of meanings, and suggested the term "revenue" for the various economic contributions, and "levy" for manpower and recruitment.

into four main categories: recruitment of monks, compulsory ritual sponsorship, lease on the usage of monastery land, and labour. The ritual sponsorship consisted mainly of the provision of food for the monks, offering items, and a small sum of money that would be handed out to the assembled monks (*phogs*).[32] Apart from the monks' allowance, the ritual expenses and the other monastic funding would be provided largely in kind and the sustenance of the monasteries was therefore largely dependent on the agro-pastoral economy of the village.

Social stratification and division of labour

The logic of monastic recruitment and the ritual economy in Limi has to be understood on the basis of the system of household categories and the division of labour within the household. Most of the rights and duties in Limi are not conceived of as individual, but are based on household membership. We do not know how many people were living in the valley in the first half of the twentieth century, but the number was presumably somewhat lower than the 791 inhabitants reported by Goldstein in 1974.[33] The direct descendants of the original settlers own relatively large patches of land and are called *grong chen* ("large households"). The houses that have split off from the large households are called *grong chung* ("small households") and have inherited a smaller portion of the family estate. The final category is called *mo rang*, which translates as "single woman households".[34] In addition, there was one blacksmith (*mgar ba*) family who served all three villages. The *mo rang* households have normally been established by unmarried women who have split off from their brothers' estates and own little or no land. The women in this household category have to pay taxes, but much less than the other two categories.[35] Generally it is said that the large households

[32] The amount of *phog* given to the monks has recently been fixed at a relatively low level to ensure equal distribution among the monks and that the ritual services provided by the monastery are also affordable for the less wealthy villagers.

[33] According to Goldstein's (1974) demographic estimates the population was increasing.

[34] The *grong chen* are also referred to as *grong pa*, the *grong chung* as *mi re*, and the *mo rang* as *pomtang* (uncertain spelling). This basic division is also described by Goldstein (1974 and 1975).

[35] Social stratification in Limi differed from that of pre-1950s Central Tibet (Carrasco 1959; Goldstein 1971; Surkhang 1966), but there were also notable differences with the Nyinba (Nyin pa) and other Tibetan communities in Humla as described by Levine (1988) and Fürer-Haimendorf (1975).

have to contribute with roughly 100% of the household tax responsibilities, the small 50% and the single women 25%. However, this does only partly apply to the monastic taxes; the main tax burden is carried by the monks' households, as will be explained below.

Limi has been a predominantly endogamous society and fraternal polyandry has been practised in families with two or more brothers. Because of the recruitment system, which will be described in more detail below, the majority of monks would come from polyandrously married families. Labour is typically divided among the members of the household according to the following pattern: the householder is normally the eldest brother in the household[36] and has the right and duty to take part in the village assembly, to carry out the household's communal labour responsibilities, and is the household's representative in conflict resolution meetings and in celebrations. Depending on the household category the second or third brother will be a monk in the monastery. The householder and the other men in the family will variously take care of the family's animals, work as craftsmen, and traders. The householder's wife will together with unmarried sisters and other female members of the household take care of most of the heavy agricultural work.[37] It is also the women who perform most of the households' service to the monasteries. One of the reasons for this is that many of the male family members spend the winter season when most of the rituals take place away from the village. Another reason is that much of the work required for the sustenance of the monasteries has been the type of work that has traditionally been regarded as women's work in Limi.

Monastic recruitment and the las sne *sponsorship duty*

Monastic recruitment has taken various forms throughout the Tibetan and Himalayan region, but traditionally it has taken place at young age and therefore, like marriage, it has often been the decision of the parents. In some cases, as in Limi, recruitment has been enforced by law, and forms part of the villagers' obligations to the monastery (*dgon pa'i*

[36] In Limi all generations normally live in the same house and the position as head of household is generally kept until retirement, when the eldest son will take over.

[37] The different types of income generating activities have been thoroughly described by Goldstein (1974 and 1975).

khral).[38] The current recruitment system in Limi was established at the end of the nineteenth century during the visit of the 33rd Drigung lineage holder, Chungtsang Tenzin Chökyi Lodrö (Chung tshang bsTan 'dzin chos kyi blo gros, 1868–1906). Chungtsang Rinpoche stayed a whole winter in Limi during his pilgrimage to Kailash and Manasarovar (1894–1896).[39] After correcting the monks' performance of monastic dances (*'cham*) during the Rim mchod festival,[40] the Rinpoche reportedly recommended that in order to perform the ritual correctly a minimum of fifty monks was needed. A large meeting was subsequently held with monk and lay representatives (*skya ser*) from all three villages during which new recruitment rules were made. We do not know how many monks there were in the monastery at the time and how they had been recruited, but the number is likely to have been relatively low since the Rinpoche saw the need for the instalment of a new recruitment system. During the meeting it was decided that the second son from large households and the third son from small households would be obliged to enrol as monks in the monastery. The agreement document (*gan rgya*) was written in the year of the fire monkey (1896) and is still followed in the three villages.[41] This recruitment rule is in line with the general fiscal system in Limi, in which the large households carry a greater tax burden than the small and subsidiary households, but it differs for instance from the system described by Goldstein in Samada, where the "monk tax" (*grwa khral*) was heavier for the small *'dud chung* households than the larger *khral pa* (Goldstein 1971: 20).

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[38] Compulsory recruitment (*grwa khral, btsun khral*) has often been mentioned in the scholarly literature on Tibet, but little is known about how widespread this particular form of monastic recruitment actually was. Levine (1992: 344) notes that compulsory recruitment was practised in neighbouring Kho char Monastery. Ramble (2008: 180–83) mentions a similar system of recruitment in Baragaon, in Nepal's Mustang District, and provides an interesting account of how the system dissolved in Te. See also Aziz (1974: 180, 274), Cassinelli and Ekvall (1969: 311), and Goldstein (1971: 20 and 2010: 9).

[39] It was towards the end of this pilgrimage that he wrote *Drigung history of Kailash*.

[40] The corrections are detailed in the *Rin chen gling 'cham yig* which was composed in 1896.

[41] This does not mean that the rule has been uncontroversial; it used to be possible to pay a fine to be exempted from the duty of convening in the monastery, but this possibility has been removed in Halji and the size of the fines has recently increased in Dzang and Til. Such amendments of the rules have generally been made at joint meetings (*skya ser*) arranged either at the initiative of the village assembly or the monasteries.

In addition, there have been a few monks who have enrolled for other reasons, and in the past there must also have been some nuns in Rinchenling, because one of the rows in the assembly hall is called the "nuns' row". I discussed with people in Limi why there were no nuns in the nuns' row anymore, and a common explanation was that the women staying in the village would have too much work to do to contemplate a monastic life.[42] It is obviously important not to reduce the question of monastic recruitment to economics, but the labour-intensive agro-pastoral economy and the sponsorship system of the monasteries in Limi are indeed likely to be the main reasons why there have not been more monks (and nuns) outside the taxation system.

What it means to be a monk differs significantly depending on the type of monasteries, the monk's position within the monastery, and the school of Buddhism to which he adheres.[43] In Limi, as in many other village monasteries, the monks are primarily ritual specialists and monastic life has been closely adapted to village life. The liturgical year starts from Lha 'babs dus chen festival celebrated on the 22nd of the 9th Tibetan month and lasts until Gos sku dus chen festival on the 25th of the 4th month.[44] During these seven winter months, the monks are obliged to serve in the monastery. Rituals are arranged every day by the monastery, the village assembly, or individual villagers and this is a very busy period for the monks. Many rituals will be performed also in the summer season, but there will be fewer monks available as most of the monks have to contribute to the economy of their households. In the past many families were completely dependent on the monks' labour for their sustenance.[45] Monks who for religious or other reasons do not

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42 Gutschow's (2004) account of the work situation of the nuns in Zangskar shows that being a nun does not necessarily mean that a woman is free from work duties in her natal home. See also Havnevik (1989: 55–59) for accounts of the economic situation of Tibetan nuns.

43 The villagers in Limi use the word *grwa ba*, which I have translated as "monk". All the monks wear robes and crop their hair short for the seven winter months, but only some of the monks would take full *dge slong* vows and these monks would generally be addressed by their *dge slong* title. The others would take *dge tshul* or *dge bsnyen* vows.

44 Lha 'babs dus chen celebrates Buddha's descent from heaven and Gos sku dus chen commemorates the founder of the Drigung Kagyu order of Buddhism, sKyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon. The monk officials will have to stay in the monastery one or two days after the festival until the annual budget calculation meeting (*rtsis sprod*) is over.

45 Contribution to the household economy by monks seems to have been relatively common, especially in village monasteries. In Limi, the monks would participate in most types of work except for ploughing and slaughtering animals.

participate in economic activity would spend the summer seasons in one of the many hermitages (*mtshams khang*) in the valley.[46] Unless there is a ritual in the monastery or the monks are called to perform rituals in one of the village households, it is the monks' families that will have to provide food for the monks.

What it has meant to be a monk and what it has meant for the households in Limi to have a monk in the family cannot be answered properly in such a short paper. For reasons of space I have delimited the scope to an examination of some of the economic implications. The majority of rituals[47] arranged by the monasteries in Limi have been funded through the rotating *las sne* positions.[48] The *las sne* responsibility implies that for a total of fifteen years, the monks' families will have to sponsor the rituals arranged by the monastery.[49] The requirements for ritual sponsorship in Halji are detailed in a book entitled *Rinchenling list of ritual expenses* (*Rin chen gling gi mchod rgyun gtong bzhi'i len krod lag khyer gsal ba'i sgron me*) kept by the caretaker of the monastery's storerooms (*gnyer pa*). The book, which was written in the year of the wood pig, probably 1935,[50] opens fittingly with a prayer to rNam sras, the god of wealth. The rest of the book consists of a list of food and offering items required for each of the regular rituals. The expenses (*gtong sgo*) for the rituals used to include considerable amounts of butter, tea, roasted barley flour, and meat. It was particularly this latter item that made the sponsorship so expensive in the past.

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[46] Devout lay villagers also spend part of the year (normally the winter season) in the hermitages.

[47] These monastic rituals constitute only a portion of the ritual activity in the villages. In addition, a significant number of rituals are arranged, and hence sponsored, either by the village or by private households.

[48] Tsarong (1987: 77ff.) uses the term *las sne* as general designation of monks' "work obligations" and part of the monastic taxes or obligations (*dgon pa'i khral*). One of these involves the compulsory "sponsoring of rituals" (*gtong sgo*). This definition also applies in Limi, but in daily speech the term *las sne* is generally used about monks who have to provide *gtong sgo*, whereas regular monk officials like the *dbu mdzad* and the *sku gnyer* are referred to as *las thog*.

[49] The *las sne* in Limi involves sponsorship of the following rituals and posts: six years of sponsorship of the regular confession and purification rituals (sKong bshags), one year for the same ritual sponsored by the caretaker of the Vairocana temple (gTing skong bshags), three years of regular meals (*rgyun thug*), and finally two years of expenses for the commemoration of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgön (Gos sku dus chen).

[50] The *rab byung* is not specified, but because of the nature of the document and some of the names occurring, I find it most likely that it was written in the sixteenth *rab byung*. As in the case of most administrative documents in Limi, passages have been added as needed and the most recent additions were written only a few years ago.

However, tea was also regarded a luxury and added to the costs.[51] The *las sne* positions rotated according to the monks' age, starting with the responsibility of funding the sKong bshags rituals.[52] The responsibilities for the more costly Mani festival (Ma ni dus chen) and regular meals (*rgyun thug*) would fall to more senior monks, and the women in Limi say that they would be allocated special fields that they would have to tend as capital (*ma rtsa*) for these funding positions.[53] Many villagers, both laypeople and monks, told me that they experienced this sponsorship as a difficult duty to fulfil.[54] The difficulties in meeting these requirements were acknowledged by the monasteries, and monks with the *las sne* sponsorship responsibility would obtain leave from the monastery in order to help their families to accumulate the required funding. In the past, some of the monks who came from poor families had to spend several seasons working in villages further south in Humla in order to help their families to pay the *gtong sgo*. The sponsorship duties were enforced strictly, but tax reductions could be obtained under special circumstances if a family was particularly poor. Such decisions were made at joint meetings between the lay and monastic population (*skya gser*) and were recorded in the administrative documents. It has been pointed out both by Kværne (1977: 92) and later by Crook and Shakya (1994: 560) that decision-making in village monasteries has tended to be more democratic than in the larger institutions and this seems to have been the case also in Limi. Despite these hardships, even the people who had suffered the most emphasised that despite of the expenses, it was valuable to have a monk in the family. Moreover, it was commonly expressed that because of the merit thus accrued, having a monk in the family would also contribute to the prosperity of the household.

[51] Eating of meat in the monastery was later abandoned.

[52] It is a requirement to have finished the six-year sponsorship of the sKong bshags rituals before taking up the monk office (*las thog*) positions.

[53] Tsarong (1987: 59) reports that in Kyilung Monastery (pseudonym) in Ladakh, each of the monks had usufruct over an agricultural field, a so called "salary field" (*phog zhing*). Jahoda (2007: 229) similarly notes that the monks in Tabo would traditionally be entitled to the produce of "monk fields" (*grwa zhing*). In Limi, usufruct to fields have only been temporarily given to the families of certain *las sne* monks.

[54] In comparison, the monks described by Tsarong (1987: 84) had sponsorship obligations of only three years.

Field taxes

The villagers also paid revenue from the agricultural output of the monasteries' landholdings. Several villagers to whom I spoke in Halji opined that the Rinchenling monastery's fields had been donated by the villagers themselves, whereas in Dzang and Til, it was commonly held that the majority of the fields were given to the monastery by the Jumla king.[55] This has been impossible to verify, but administrative documents testify to a number of cases in which villagers have donated fields to the monastery,[56] and the story about the king of Jumla quoted in the beginning of this paper only mentions the monasteries in Dzang and Til. It is also significant to note that the majority of land has been privately owned in Limi. Most families would farm a combination of privately owned fields, some fields belonging to the monastery, and some fields on land belonging to the village assembly.[57] At least from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, no families in Limi seem to have been dependent on a single landlord. The system of monastic landownership in Limi therefore differed from that of Central Tibet (Carrasco 1959; Goldstein 1971; Surkhang 1966).

The major part of the monastic property has been leased out to villagers, who have built a house or are working fields on the land. The monastery levies a "lease fee" (*bca' khral*)[58] on the usage of monastery land. The lease is hereditary, and the list of households tending such fields and the amount of taxes paid by each is recorded in the *Rinchenling taxation register* from 1952. According to this document, there were 49 taxpaying households in Halji at the time, and the total revenue from the fields in Halji amounted to 63 *khal* and 5 *bre* of grain, a sum that counted only for a relatively low percentage of the monastery's income. The grain that was collected as revenue from the monastery's fields would rarely be used for the monks' consumption since all ritual activity was financed by the sponsors, and when not performing rituals, the monks lived in their respective households. Instead

[55] Many of the Jumla kings were known as strong supporters for the Drigungpas. See for instance Petech 2003 and Vitali 2003.

[56] The reasons given for the donations would vary from the seeking of merit for deceased family members to the payment of debts.

[57] The estimate of the size of the landholdings was provided by a previous *mgo pa*. I have not yet been able to go through the Nepali land register documents.

[58] Among the various spellings occurring in the tax document this seems to be the correct one.

the grain revenue used to be lent out to villagers in need of seed grain. One of the senior monks recalled:

> In the past we had scarcity of food and all the grain would be consumed during the winter. Then, in the spring, villagers would request the monastery for seed grain. The monastery would give a double amount to the large households. If the monastery for instance lent 2 *khal* of grain to the large households, small households would be allowed a loan of 1 *khal*.

The monk maintained that the opportunity to obtain loans from the monastery in this way was appreciated by the villagers, because even if the interest rate was high, it was considerably lower than the interest rate demanded by private creditors. The citation also shows that the same distribution logic was used for loans as for taxes: the large households could take loans that were up to twice as high as those allowed to the small households. It seems to have been quite common that monasteries, as landlords and recipients of large donations, often in kind, would lend out some of the surplus for interest.[59] The monastery would also lend out money to traders, and in this way the monasteries functioned as rudimentary credit institutions.[60]

Work contributions

The final lay obligation to the monastery consisted of labour. The households had to take turns serving tea, fetching water, and tending the fire in the monastery kitchen. Both men and women could in theory perform these duties, but most often they were performed by women. The work would be organised on a rotational basis, with the small households serving half of the time of the large households. The single women from the *mo rang* category told me that they did not need to serve tea, but had to contribute with firewood and carry water from the stream to the east of the village. Laypeople could also be asked to cook in the monastery or perform other tasks during special events, but

[59] See for instance Nornang (1990: 255). In the case described by Nornang, the loan conditions were tougher than in Limi, especially the interest rate on cash loans was very high. Monasteries' practice of lending out money is also described in Gutschow (2004: 108), Levine (1992: 339) and Tsarong (1987).

[60] In Limi, also the village assemblies and private households would give loans in grain or cash to villagers against an interest. Credit could similarly be obtained from trading partners, but often at higher interest rates and the villagers therefore normally preferred to keep loans within the village.

would often volunteer as this would be paid work. People in Limi told me that it was common for poor people, especially women from *mo rang* households, to work in the monastery kitchen.

Most of the contributions have been made in kind and it has to a very large extent been the continuous work of the men and women in the valley that has kept the monasteries alive. A significant amount of the grain, roasted barley flour, butter, dried cheese, and other agricultural products that had to be paid as taxes, provided as payments for rituals, or given as voluntary donations were products of the women's labour. It was also the women who spun the wool and wove the cloth used for the monks' robes, and it was the women who fetched all the firewood and water needed for the numerous tea servings. The men worked hard as well and had to spend large parts of the year away from the village trading,[61] herding, or making wooden bowls. As in most communities in the region, the agricultural output in Limi would seldom be sufficient and the majority of the households were dependent on a combination of agriculture, pastoralism, trade, crafts production, and manual labour for their sustenance. The administrative documents mainly enlist the products needed, but reveal little information about who actually carried it out.

Voluntary ritual sponsorship and donations

In addition to the rituals arranged by the monastic institution and sponsored by the monks' families during the winter season, communal rituals are sponsored by the village assembly or groups of villagers, and a large number are organised by individual households throughout the year. Most households in the village sponsor supplication rituals (*gsol kha*) to the protector deity A phyi Chos kyi sgrol ma as well as purification offerings (*bsang gsol*) at least once a month. Among all the ritual activity in the monastery, the Rim mchod festival has been regarded as the most important both by monks and laypeople.[62] It is celebrated annually at the end of the twelfth Tibetan month with a nine-day recitation of *The eight pronouncements* (*bKa' brgyad*) ritual text and

[61] Additional grain, tea, and other provisions were obtained by trading salt, wool, or various wooden or textile products on the seasonal marts in the region. See Goldstein (1975) and Fürer-Haimendorf (1975).

[62] The importance given to this festival can be illustrated by the fact that the minimum number of monks who have to be present in the three monasteries corresponds to the minimum number of monks required to perform the ritual.

the performance of *'cham* monastic dances. The festival is organised at the villagers' request because it is believed to be the most effective ritual for preventing diseases, crop failure and other major obstacles, and therefore a very important contribution to the society's wellbeing and prosperity. The festival is funded partly through village taxes, partly through monastic funds, and through sponsorship of private households. Regarding the private sponsorship of rituals, one of the elderly men in Limi pointed out that: "[...] if you look at the rituals performed by the monastery throughout the year, there are many privately sponsored sKong bshags rituals.[63] Nowadays everybody is well off compared with the past, when only very few families were able to sponsor this kind of extensive ritual". Interestingly, many of the rituals he referred to were sponsored by single woman households, a category that was economically disadvantaged in the past. This has only become possible because of the recent years' work possibilities. The sponsorship of rituals can thus be seen as an indicator of the economy and wellbeing of the society. Moreover, the increase in ritual activity also says something about the continued value placed on the monastery in society.

Many of the statues, *thangka*, scriptures, printing blocks, and other religious items in Rinchenling monastery were once donated to the monastery by lay patrons and some of them are named in the *Rinchenling Monastery inventory.* Among the sponsors enlisted, some were from the wealthy families in Limi, others came from the wider Ngari region, and a few came from the main Drigung Kagyu monasteries in Central Tibet. Names of a number of hermits (*mtshams pa*) occur in the lists, suggesting that many of the foreign donors were pilgrims to Kailash, who were meditating in the caves and hermitages in Limi. This is a sign that there has been frequent contact with other Buddhist institutions, and such gifts must have contributed to forging and strengthening links between them.

But it is important to note that the material support went both ways. As villagers testify, many of these hermits were receiving food and other alms (*bsod snyoms*) from the villagers, and many of the religious objects donated to the monastery, together with various rituals, must have been a way of reciprocating the sponsorship from lay devotees.

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[63] These privately sponsored rituals are performed in addition to the sKong bshags rituals sponsored by the families of the *las sne* monks.

For instance, the Dzogchen (rDzogs chen) masters Tshogkhang (Tshogs khang) Rinpoche, who spent the last ten years of his life meditating in Chaye (sPya ye) hermitage in Limi,[64] and Serta (gSer thar) Rinpoche, were both sponsored by families from Til Village.[65] Another, more famous Dzogchen master, Shabkar (Zhabs dkar, 1781–1851), recorded in his biography that generous donations were provided when he visited Limi as part of his pilgrimage to Kailash (Ricard 1994: 321, 328). Such sponsorship would occasionally involve donations of money or religious objects if the recipient was an acknowledged religious master,[66] but the most important, and largely unrecorded contributions, were the local villagers' steady provisions of food supplies. These stories are not mentioned in the documents, only stored in local memories. Old grandmothers in Halji for instance, told me how they for years had used to carry water and food provisions to the hermits who had meditated in the hermitages high up on the mountainside above the village. It must have been very hard work, but this type of support has gone largely unremarked in the written sources.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Buddhist institutions have been dependent on the laity for funding since the first Buddhist sangha was established almost two and a half millennia ago. But the forms this support has taken and the nature of the relationship between religious and lay establishments have varied considerably in different historical periods and in different contexts. The historical accounts quoted at the beginning of the paper praise the king of Jumla for providing the monastic institutions in Limi with estates and lay sponsors, thus establishing a permanent basis for monastic funding. The main purpose of this paper has been to look at this patronage from below and to explore what providing "abundant support for the liveli-

[64] According to *The biography of the Kagyu masters*, Ye shes rdzong hermitage in sPya ye was built by sGrub thob Seng ge ye shes during his three-year stay in the thirteenth century.

[65] Tshogs khang Rin po che, alias E ta rā dza or Pad ma bde ba'i rgyal po (1873–1933) and gSer thar Rin po che alias Padma Lung rtogs rGya mtsho, 1891–1964 were both disciples of Dudjom Lingpa (bDud 'joms gling pa, 1835–1904).

[66] For an interesting discussion of hierarchy in the Tibetan Buddhist "economy of merit", see Gutshow (2004: 77–122).

hood of the hermits and monks"[67] implied for the common villagers. The system that was established in the late nineteenth century made recruitment compulsory and the monks' families were given the responsibility of providing food for the monks through a system of rotating las sne positions. However, all households have contributed through payment of revenue from the monastery's fields, rotating labour, and a considerable amount of voluntary ritual sponsorship and donations. The villagers continue to support their monasteries and they still keep the strict rules for recruitment and ritual funding. When explaining why, it is the ritual part of the ritual economy that is emphasised, both by the monks and the laypeople.

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[67] *dge 'dun ri khrod pa rnams la 'tsho rten gya nom pa sbyor ba* (*Drigung history of Kailash*: 499).

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HIDDEN HIMALAYAN TRANSCRIPTS: STRATEGIES OF SOCIAL OPPOSITION IN MUSTANG (NEPAL), 19TH–20TH CENTURIES

CHARLES RAMBLE

INTRODUCTION

It is to Antonio Gramsci that we owe one of the most influential theories of class oppression: the concept of social hegemony. Gramsci's theory arises from his division of the state into two entities: political society on the one hand and the sphere of civil society on the other. The state is the expression of the dominant "fundamental group"—a term that he used instead of "class" in order to avoid the attention of the censors in the prison where he wrote much of his work—which is the bourgeoisie. Political government takes the form of institutions such as the judiciary, the army and the police, which are openly coercive. Civil society, by contrast, is made up of "soft" entities such as the church, the family, schools and so forth. For the most part political government does not make its presence felt, and dominance over the masses is achieved thanks to their subscription to the values purveyed by the dominant group through the structures of civil society. This "spontaneous consent" to being dominated is what Gramsci refers to as social hegemony (Gramsci 1971: 12). It is only when this consent becomes visibly frayed, and the mechanisms of civil society fail to achieve their purpose, that the apparatus of political society must be applied to restore the status quo.

Although Gramsci was writing particularly about relations of production between classes (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat), his concept of social hegemony has been plausibly applied to numerous other contexts that entail the domination of one community by another. Examples include the study of inter-caste relations in India (Zene 2011), and the use of English literary studies as a device to inculcate British standards and values in colonial India via the school curriculum (Viswanathan 1989). It could, in principle, be applied to the social environment with which I shall be concerned in this paper. The setting is a

culturally Tibetan (and partly Tibeto-Burman) enclave in the Nepal, consisting of a hierarchical order of hereditary social groups. The rulers in the period with which we are concerned were the local aristocracy, and the Gramscian model would regard as evidence of "consenting domination" the many approving cultural formulations of the social order, such as the song-and-dance performances, known as *shon*, that were "offered" to the Nobility[1] at seasonal festivals by the Commoner rank, and in various reverential topoi that feature in folksongs. Here is what may be one of the simplest formulations of hegemony:

> One beautiful flower,
> Two beautiful flowers,
> Offer these beautiful flowers to the birthplace of the root-lama (*rtswa ba'i bla ma*).
>
> One beautiful flower,
> Two beautiful flowers,
> Offer these beautiful flowers to the birthplace of the lord who leads us (*'go 'dren dpon po*).
>
> One beautiful flower,
> Two beautiful flowers,
> Offer these beautiful flowers to the birthplace of our dear parents (*drin can pha ma*).

Gramsci's work has been criticised on numerous grounds, most commonly perhaps by Marxist writers who have taken issue with his interpretation of certain fundamental dogmas, such as historicism.[2] But perhaps the most devastating critique, delivered in deceptively non-confrontational tones, has come from James Scott, and is articulated in his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990). Since it is of some importance to this article, the main points of the book's argument may be presented briefly.[3]

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[1] The different social strata of the enclave in question will be rendered with capital initials, since some of them are nominally professions that are not actually practised. Thus not all Priests are priests, and Artisans no longer do any artisanal work, since this has become the province of Blacksmiths and Tailors.

[2] For an extended critical appraisal of Gramsci's thought see Anderson 1976.

[3] I am indebted to Sara Shneiderman for giving me the occasion to reflect on the relevance of James Scott's work to the social history of Tibetan-speaking communities.

Public and hidden transcripts: the case against Gramsci

The basic premise of Scott's critique is simple: Gramsci is wrong because there is no such thing as hegemony in the sense of domination with the consent of the dominated: subordinate groups do *not* subscribe to the world-view of those who dominate them. The illusion that this is the case is created by the success on the part of subordinate groups in concealing their disaffection: all that is accessible is the "public transcript", the official veneer used by such groups to hide their true sentiments. The more intolerant of resistance the dominant group is, the greater the degree of acquiescence shown by the dominated. This much is evident from the fact that, whenever the establishment eases the pressure, subordinates will test the waters with relatively anodyne expressions of discontent and, if these expressions are not immediately extinguished, will amplify the signs of their opposition.

More than once it has happened that the dominant have mistakenly regarded such concessions as a safety valve that permits the underclass to let off pressure before returning to their state of habitual subservience. In fact, these opportunities are not a safety valve: they are the thin end of a wedge. The archetypal example is that of the case of the *Cahiers de doléances*, the opportunity given by Louis XVI to the French peasantry (among others) in the spring of 1789 to register their complaints against the government in publicly accessible lists. The complaints lodged there were careful to accuse the corrupt and exploitative officers of the state and church, never the king himself. But the chance to express grievances in this way did not result in the peasantry returning to its previous condition of apparent acceptance; it culminated, within a very few months, in the French Revolution (*ibid.*: 77, 146).

The remarkable thing, Scott suggests, is not that people should subscribe to a world-view that places them in a position of inferiority; it is rather that they should have the courage at all to vent their discontent, given the brutal response that history has shown generally follows manifestations of resistance. The point is illustrated by examples from the recent history of Tibet, a region that Scott does not consider among the many cases he cites.

In the two decades between the suppression of the Tibetan uprising of 1959 and the end of the Cultural Revolution there were a few outbreaks of resistance in rural communities but, to the best of my knowledge, not a single recorded public expression of discontent in Lhasa.

Five years after Beijing's declaration of religious tolerance in the form of the famous Document 19 of 1982 (*The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period*), the Tibetan capital was rocked by large-scale demonstrations, spearheaded by religious figures. The unrest was quickly and effectively calmed. In 2008, awareness of international visibility provided an environment for even more widespread protests, not just in Lhasa but throughout the Tibetan-speaking parts of the People's Republic of China, with results that the demonstrators must surely have foreseen.

In view of the consequences for one's livelihood (especially for those working in the public sector) or one's family, resistance tends to be muted to the point of near-imperceptibility. Some poignant examples of such—literally—inaudible messages are given by Maria-Luisa Nodari in a recent study of the history of Chinese mountaineering. To cite just one instance: on 4 April 1985 nine members of a Tibetan team of climbers reached the peak of Mt Cho Oyu as the culmination of a climb that had been organised as part of the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region. In their book on Chinese mountaineering, Zhou Zheng and Liu Zhenkai report the event—apparently in all innocence—as follows: "Unfurling a [national] flag they tried to shout out 'Long life to the Fatherland', but their throat were too parched" (Zhou and Liu 1995: 151, cited in Nodari 2012: 67).

In the absence of any arena for the overt expression of discontent it is often the arts that provide the context for protest. In the case of visual arts, the message is conveyed through the presence of salient cultural symbols (white stupas, for example) or the juxtaposition of motifs that serve to reinforce bonds among those who understand the implicit intention. The more public the forum, the subtler the message must be. A Tibetan artist who worked from his home once showed me his oeuvre. Most paintings carried political messages of varying degrees of subtlety. One canvas showed a Tibetan-style cairn composed not of stones but of heaped-up human corpses, and surmounted by a pole bearing a red flag. He commented, rather unnecessarily, that he had no plans to exhibit this one. By contrast, on another occasion I happened to be standing near the front desk of one of Lhasa's main international hotels with the man who had conceived and executed the decoration of the foyer walls, while he pointed out to me, with no small satisfaction, the damning messages concealed in the scenes he had created.

Perhaps the best-documented medium for expression of nonconformity is song. Contemporary popular songs contain veiled references to *personae non gratae* and outlawed aspirations. As in the case of visual arts, the trick here is to achieve a balance between being comprehensible to insiders while remaining opaque to the watchful authorities. There are numerous instances in recent years of songs that enjoyed wide popularity at least partly because of the perceived subtext of their lyrics until, in certain cases at least, the censors themselves read between the lines and prohibited further diffusion over the airwaves. The significance of song in Tibetan social criticism is of course not confined to the post-1950s era. Melvyn Goldstein's study of Lhasa street songs provides numerous illustrations of excoriating political wit (Goldstein 1982), and Michael Aris' study of Bhutanese balladry situates its subject within the more general phenomenon of Tibetan and Himalayan anti-establishment mendicant singers (Aris 1987). To the best of my knowledge the most extensive study to date on the continuity of the Tibetan tradition of social criticism across a range of literary genres is to be found in a recent and still unpublished work by Lama Jabb (2013: 60–92; on modern songs and Tibetan national sentiment, see also Lama Jabb 2012). While the avarice of the clergy and the oppressive brutality of lords are recurring motifs in these songs, we still know very little about the day-to-day life of the Tibetan peasantry, and have almost no chance to hear what they themselves might have had to say about the government officials, local rulers and monastic agents whose exactions brought them to, and often beyond, the brink of penury. Official documents of the sort discussed by Jeannine Bischoff in this volume are of inestimable value for understanding the quotidian hardships of Central Tibetan *mi ser*, and their methodical or desperate responses to their living conditions; but they remain, nevertheless, public transcripts of the people's lives.

In the case of the recent Tibetan uprisings mentioned above, the response of the dominant group seems to have been astonishment and a sense of betrayal that a people who ought to have been grateful for their peaceful liberation should have bitten the hand that had freed them. Among the many comparable examples that are considered by Scott—and that I shall return to below—is that of the slaves in the Ante-bellum American South. During the Civil War, white families were shocked and distressed by the suspicion that their loyal slaves might actually be hoping for victory for the North. Their suspicions were aroused not by any statement to this effect by the slaves, but by the absolute silence of the latter on the issue.

How then, could the Gramscian theory of hegemony have got it so wrong? Because, says Scott, the theory takes at face value the version of events to which the subordinate groups *claim* to subscribe. This is the version to which Scott refers as the "public transcript". Violent uprisings and eloquent silences are not spontaneous manifestations; they are the expressions of a well-formulated view of the world that is drastically different from the official discourse. And if these expressions come as a shock to the dominant groups, that is precisely because the latter are not privy to the well-concealed sentiments that generated them. It is for this reason that Scott refers to such alternative versions, as well as to their manifestations, as "hidden transcripts".

The setting: the dukedom of Baragaon

While Scott acknowledges his debt to the growing body of published "history from below", he emphasises the problems encountered by certain social historians in tackling their subjects: the subordinate groups in question were sometimes so cautious as to have left barely any written evidence at all. A case in point is Christopher Hill's study of the seventeenth-century Lollards, whose heterodox religious beliefs are so difficult to ascertain because their followers "were anxious to leave no traces" (Hill 1982: 41, cited Scott 1990: 88). When such evidence does come to light it often reveals a degree of structure and coordination of which the dominant groups are generally entirely unaware.

In this contribution I wish to present a selection of documents produced by different subordinate communities that reveal secret strategies of coordination of precisely this sort. The area concerned is the southern part of what is now Nepal's Mustang District. Extensive studies of the history and ethnography of this region are to be found in several publications,[4] but a few words should be said here to provide the necessary political and social context.

Baragaon, literally the "twelve villages" (Nep. Bāhragāũ) is actually an enclave of eighteen settlements that once formed part of the kingdom of Lo, but whose ruler—a duke who was administering the area on behalf of the king—seceded from the parent kingdom in the 17th century and became a direct vassal of the powerful principality of

[4] See for example Schuh 1994, 1995; Ramble 1985, 2008a.

Jumla. After the unification of Nepal in the late 18th century, the dukes of Baragaon retained judicial and administrative powers under the authority of the Gorkhas until the mid-19th century, when the government of Nepal—by now in the hands of the dynastic rule of the Rana Prime Ministers—auctioned off these rights, as well as the power to collect taxes, to a non-local contractor. The communities are all Tibetan speaking with the exception of an enclave of five, collectively known as the Shod yul, whose inhabitants speak a Tibeto-Burman language known as Se skad. The population is socially stratified in five ranks (*rgyud pa*): the Nobility (*sras po, dpon po*), the Priesthood (*bla mchod*), the Commoners (*phal pa*), Artisans (*'gar ba*) and Indo-European service castes, specifically Blacksmiths and Tailors. The Nobility, the Artisans and the service castes are endogamous, whereas the Priesthood and the Commoners intermarry. The Commoners themselves are stratified into two ranks: members of the Shod yul—who are considered by the rest of Baragaon to comprise the majority of the lower rank of Commoners—do not generally marry outside their subenclave, while one of the Shod yul—a settlement named Te—was until a decade ago itself almost entirely endogamous.

This rather essentialised summary is inevitably an oversimplification of what is of course a much more complicated picture, but the many nuances are not relevant to the cases that will be examined below.

Baragaon vs Kathmandu

The highest-level, most "public", hidden transcripts in Baragaon are those in which the entire population is seen to be united against an external entity. Such documents are uncommon, but the archive of the community of Lubrak contains a particularly explicit example of such an agreement that embraces all the social strata of the enclave. (The presence of the document in Lubrak's archive is explained by the fact that this priestly community was a sort of scribal office for Baragaon.) The beginning of the document is damaged, but from the names of the signatories it can be safely dated to the 1880s. The document is a resolution to oppose an attempt by the government to move a certain customs post to a location that would have been disadvantageous to Baragon. While the details do not concern us here, two brief excerpts are relevant because they provide unequivocal declarations of unity.

Since the language of the first of these is somewhat opaque, the transliteration is followed by an amended rendering in more conventional orthography.[5]

> ...de la bgrong dpa' med khra dzhal sngo dpon bo tshang ma lar rgya 1 man dpa' 2 med...
> (de la grong pa me khral zhal ngo dpon po tshang ma lhan rgyas 1 [ma zad] 2 min)
>
> In this [matter], everyone—[members of] full estates, subsidiary households and noble aristocrats—shall form a single, undivided body.

Secondly, the document concludes with the statement that:

> ...dpon bang tshang ma nas chod [tsh]igs =ie= (yi ge) ['br]i {±3S}
>
> This document of agreement has been written by all nobles and subjects. (Lubrak doc. 1)

But as stated above, such expressions of unity of purpose between the ruling elite and the commoners seem to have been the exception rather than the rule. The power of the aristocracy has waned over the course of time, and for the past decades their status has been largely ceremonial (though even this is being challenged by their traditional social inferiors in the wake of the Maoist insurgency). However, it is quite clear from the available sources—and, to a lesser extent, from living memory—that their authority was reinforced by political power and coercion. The duke of Baragaon had the authority to choose a Commoner headman for all of Baragaon, apparently as a sort of liaison between the headmen of the individual communities and the ruling aristocracy. Some of the administrative and ceremonial functions of this headman in the late seventeenth century are detailed in a document studied by Dieter Schuh (1995), though information of the period between then and the advent of ethnographic research in the 1970s is largely lacking.

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[5] The conventions followed in the transliterated passages are as follows: {abc} = intentional deletions; Z = *che rtags*; ^ = *tsha rtags*, a small diagonal stroke used as an abbreviation for various letters, but most frequently *tsha*. The Tibetan text of the excerpts is unedited unless stated otherwise. Contracted forms (*bskungs yig*) are represented as closely as possible as they appear in the text, followed by a full-length form in brackets.

Oppression and resistance

The case of one nineteenth-century headman whose name does appear in a number of documents from Kag—one of the "capitals" (*rgyal sa*) of Baragaon—is worth citing, because it provides anecdotal evidence of the oppressiveness of the dominant groups. The headman in question, Genpa Daro (rGan pa Dar po), is named in tax documents for a number of years in the second half of the 19th century up to 1864 (Ramble 1994). (The fact that the texts name at least one other person with the title of *rgan pa* does suggest that the position of headman was no longer the solitary ducal appointment it had originally been.) A well-known story has it that Genpa Daro was a champion of the welfare of the common people and this outspoken defence of their rights provoked the enmity of the aristocracy. If the story is true, it may well be the case that he was attempting to uphold the law against abuses perpetrated by the local nobility against a populace who were either unaware of their legal rights or were unable to exercise them—we shall see documented cases of this sort presently. One of the noblewomen was married to the ruler in Kathmandu,[6] and she was able to obtain the seal with which to authorise a forged death-warrant against the turbulent headman. On receipt of the document, the Nobles or their henchmen took Genpa Daro to the river below the settlement, where they beheaded him, and hung his head under a bridge. The last detail is more than just a gratuitous act of barbarity. It is not uncommon in Mustang to see the heads of goats hanging under bridges. These are animals that have died of some sort of cerebral disorder locally described simply as "madness", and hanging the heads of the dead animals under bridges is believed to prevent the condition from spreading. The sight of Genpa Daro's head dangling above the river would have sent a clear message to anyone who saw it.

Even if this story is apocryphal it carries echoes of palpable popular animosity towards the dominant groups; and, as we shall see, there is certainly documentary evidence—from precisely this time—both of exploitation of the community by the local elite and also of abuses perpetrated in defiance of rulings from far-away Kathmandu.

The dukes of Baragaon may have been the rulers of the enclave, and the political structure was evidently a top-down scheme with a single

[6] It is at least possible that there was a woman of Kag who was a member of a Rana household, since the provision of young women to the Rana court formed part of Baragaon's tax obligations at this time.

appointed headman liaising between the nobility and the local village leaders, but there is clear evidence that the communities had mechanisms for acephalous or "horizontal" communication and coordination that bypassed the apical figures. One of the most striking illustrations of this is a document from 1863 which shows the commoners of Baragaon acting concertedly as a unified body. In 1857 the government had introduced a contract (Nep. *ijara*) system whereby the hereditary aristocracy were displaced by an outsider who had bid successfully for the right to collect revenues in the region.[7] The contractor exercised his prerogatives through local agents, who seem to have been none other than the local nobility whom he had in certain respects displaced. In any event, the obligations imposed by the contractor were far more burdensome than had been the case under the dukes, and the people of Baragaon lost no time in presenting their grievances to the government. Details concerning this document are given elsewhere (Ramble forthcoming a), but certain salient points may be summarised here. We do not have the petition that was actually submitted to the government. The document that is available to us is a Tibetan translation of the Nepali text that the government issued by way of a response to Baragaon's complaints, but the *narratio* section rehearses the content of the petition, giving us a full list of the grievances that are then addressed.

A selection from the twelve complaints will give some idea of the causes of dissatisfaction: the contractor imposes fines without consultation with locally respected figures; the period of unpaid provision of firewood has increased from four months to eight months; pack- and riding-animals are requisitioned without notice, whereas customarily several days' notice was given to enable people to bring the animals down from the pastures; while exemption from tax payments had been conceded for six nobles houses, this privilege has now been extended to the houses of their illegitimate children (presumably those of the contractor or his aristocratic agents); fines that use previously to be paid partly in cash and partly in grain must now be paid exclusively in cash; fines for forbidden sexual liaisons between Commoners and

[7] The contractor in question was almost certainly a certain Hem Karna Khadga. It is known that this individual held the customs contract from 1862 to 1867, and the document seems to suggest that the contractor at the time the document was issued in 1863 was the same as the one at the time of the events with which it deals three years earlier (Vinding 1998: 81). See also *ibid.*: 399, where the contractor is named as Captain Hemakarna Khadka Chhetri.

Artisans have been increased; villagers are fined for failing to gather firewood for the lord even when they have been prevented from doing so by heavy snow; the contractors' aristocratic agents send their livestock into the commoners' fields even before they have been harvested.

The government's response was mixed: it upheld most of the complaints, rejected some and compromised on others. However, our concern here is less with the outcome of the case than with the fact that the petition was produced and submitted at all. The formulation of the complaint makes it entirely clear that the eighteen villages of Baragaon, far from requiring an apical duke to manage and direct their activities, were fully capable of coordinating an effective legal strategy. The matter did not stop there. In the course of the government's investigation of the contractor's alleged abuses it was discovered that Baragaon had failed to pay its government taxes for one year in the period before the introduction of the *ijara* system, when one of the dukes was still in power. The duke was prosecuted and compelled to pay the government the money he had collected from Baragaon as taxes but omitted to pass on, while the population demanded—and received—a written apology from their former lord for having deceived them in this way. If there was ever a written correspondence to enable the coordination required to achieve these results, it has not yet come to light. All we can say with confidence is that a great deal of complex coordination must have taken place behind the scenes.

Strategies for alleviating oppression: the case of Lubrak's taxes

The document cited here shows the communities of Baragaon acting in concert to uphold their interests—and rights—against the exactions of its rulers. There were numerous instances in which it was not the entire enclave but one or more of its component settlements that are singled out for victimisation of one sort or another.

The Priestly (*bla mchod*) rank in Baragaon are for the most part concentrated in two communities: the Buddhist village of Chongkhor and the Bonpo settlement of Lubrak. The taxes paid by Lubrak had for centuries been a largely symbolic affair, consisting of a small quantity of *goji* berries, wild chives and some birch bark (Ramble and Vinding 1987: 18). It had paid these items to whichever principality had had jurisdiction over it at different periods: Thini, immediately to the south of Baragaon, is named as the beneficiary power in one document, and Manang, to the east of Mustang, in another. It seems to be the case that

it continued this token gesture to the rulers of Baragaon until the latter part of the nineteenth century, after which point the concession was terminated and a substantial levy imposed. Lubrak refused to pay, and the dukes who were then in power—probably as the agents of the contractor at that time, a certain Krishna Prasad Thakali—responded by sending henchmen to expropriate property from individual households. It is only in the *internal* archive of Lubrak itself that we know something of the strategy adopted by the community to cope with these depredations:

> 4. ... blu brags yul pa gro pa mo rang ma {kha' don tshig}
>
> 5. rnaṃs 'dzoṃ nas / grong re mi re nas spe don gnas sngar pa srol la med pa la / dpon bang rnaṃs nas
>
> 6. lags bcugs pa shar tshe grong pa mo rang ma gsu yis gyud khyer kyang yul pa 'dzoṃ gnas gyud sde thogs la
>
> 7. rin skyabs byas nas rin ma pham pa yul nas srad gyud mchod pa yin /
>
> A vote was held at a meeting consisting of one person from each household, and it was agreed that, even though there had been no such tradition in the past, if the lords and their subjects should lay their hands on anyone and expropriate the property of either an estate or a subsidiary household, a village meeting should be held; an assessment should be carried out of that property, and its value restored to the owner in full by the community. (Lubrak doc. 2)

But Lubrak is a small settlement, and if, as this "hidden transcript" shows, it had developed a strategy for alleviating the hardships suffered by individual families by distributing their losses across the community, they were powerless to prevent the raids of the bailiffs.

The importance of horizontal coordination: the case of the Shod yul

If Lubrak had no natural allies with whom it might make common cause against the rest of Baragaon and its leaders, this was not the case with the five villages comprising the subsidiary enclave of the Shod yul. While there are very few recorded instances of *individual* Shod yul clashing with the rest of Baragaon, there are numerous cases in which the five settlements presented themselves as a unified bloc against the majority. One of these altercations flared up in 1922, when the Shod yul sent a declaration of non-cooperation to the headmen (*rgan pa*) and warden (*spyi khyab*) of southern Baragaon. The cause of the conflict is not recorded, but the document contains five points stating that, henceforth, the Shod yul will boycott all future meetings of Baragaon and

will refuse to pay their share of the expenses for the enclave's officials. But it is the preamble to the document that is particularly interesting for our present purposes:

> 1. [...] ngos mi
> 2. zer smong pa gla skra rnams la / mis ngan pa skra res nyis nas 'dug spo mang rig stong
> 3. ba rkyen gi / 'dis phar lngar byas gyab gyur dar byas dwong len byas nas / kha cig spyes 2
> 4. mis byis pa ngos rten yin / dwa sta ngos shod yul lnga phyes spya mo chung spa ra don
> 5. tshan gang byung skyang cigs spa ma stogs spa 7 med Zzhin / ngos yul 5 / nas zur go yon
> 6. su nas byas skyang / bha dngul 500 lnga 'rgya tham spa nye spa Zzha Zzhud med'i (med pa'i)
> 7. len gyu yin /
>
> Because a few wicked people have been inflicting various forms of hardship on us dumb [*gla skra* < Nep. *lāṭa*], backward people, we shall henceforth abandon whatever procedures may have been usual in the past and adopt new policies. We shall certainly not behave as if we had two tongues in one mouth, but in whatsoever mater may arise, whether it be as great as a double six [in a game of dice] or as insignificant as two ones, we five Shod yul shall act as one, and stand undivided. Whichever of us five Shod yul diverges from this policy shall pay a fine of 500 rupees, and no excuses will be accepted. (HMA/Baragaon/Tib/05)

To the extent that this document was intended to be read by (or to) the entirety of Baragaon, it corresponds to what Scott refers to as the public transcript. It tells Baragaon nothing about the procedures whereby the five communities arrived at this consensus. It does provide the assurance that the Shod yul do not speak "as if they had two tongues in one mouth"—meaning that none of them will betray another—and backs up this declaration of unanimity by saying that each one is bound to the agreement on pain of paying a fine of 500 rupees (an almost impossibly large sum at that time) for violating this union. This may well have been true, but the fact that they announced it was clearly intended to persuade Baragaon that they meant business, since no one would trifle with such large sums.

In certain cases it would not have been in the Shod yul's interest to reveal that they had made any sort of separate arrangement among themselves. Plenary meetings of Baragaon were held periodically to decide on matters that concerned the enclave as a whole—such as trade and transit arrangements with northern Mustang, or in negotiating with

the government over the positioning of checkposts. It was expected in such cases that the village representatives would be acting in the interest of Baragaon as a whole, without consideration of individual community interests.

What Baragaon did not know—or at least, was never explicitly told by the Shod yul—was that, prior to any plenary gathering of the enclave the five would hold a secret meeting and decide how they were going to vote at the general assembly. The following excerpt is taken from a document from the archive of Te, and records a resolution of the five Shod yul that they should vote as a bloc.

> An agreement among the five Shod yul. Wherever we have to attend a meeting, whether far or near, in accordance with the traditional practice of Ngazhab [the commoners of Baragaon], we five villages shall place our votes in the same place, not separately. Whichever village casts its votes separately shall be fined.[8]

In the course of such general assemblies the other communities of Baragaon may well have *suspected* that the five Shod yul were in collusion, but the fact that the documentary record for such an arrangement was not in the public domain meant that there was no evidence to prove the existence of such well-organised factionalism. This document, and others like it, belong to the hidden transcript of the Shod yul as a collectivity. We might imagine such an assembly of Baragaon, and the frustration that the leaders must have felt at the imperviousness of the representations of the Shod yul to reasonable arguments, and the conviction that the wearers of those masks of innocence might not be as "dumb and backward" as they claimed to be. We are reminded of the suspicion elicited by the particular inscrutability of American slaves when the topic of the Civil War was raised:

> Noting that her slaves fell uncharacteristically silent whenever the latest news from the front in the Civil War became a topic of white conversation, Mary Chestnut took their silence as one that hid something: "They go about in their black masks, not a ripple of emotion showing; and yet on all other subjects except the war they are the most excitable of all races...". (Scott 1990: 3, citing Patterson 1982: 208)

The tenacity of the Gramscian notion of hegemony, Scott notes, is sustained in no small measure by the reality that many subordinate groups are non-literate. It is only from their coordinated response to persecu-

[8] HMA/Te/Tib/51. The full text and translation of this document are given in Ramble 2008b: 286.

tion that the existence of behind-the-scenes organisation can be inferred. Fortunately for us, the evidence of local archives in Mustang renders the effort of such inference unnecessary. Several documents offer priceless insights into the precise mechanisms for the manufacture of consent. Here is another excerpt from a document (from 1936) from the Shod yul's archives:

1. [...] sgan pa mi ngo lnga yi skor nas sngon bsrol nar rtar
2. mchod tshig dbyed pa stod nas phyi dra nang nas smad dra gang rtar byung na yang yul kha lnga po grong pa yul gang dra tham cad gcig chong gnyis chong
3. man pa khyod stod shos khyo tshug shos khyod bsteng yod shos khyod tsang li shos khod gya ga shos bzer ba med sgal srid zer ba yul nas 'byung na
4. bha dngul 100 grong pa nas gram na bha dngul 23 yin [...]

The headmen [of the] five [Shod yul] must adhere to past custom. If enemies come from the north or south, from without or within or wherever, all the [five] villages and their households must act as one, and no one may say "You are Te Shod, you are Taye Shod" (i.e. that it is your problem, not ours) and so forth. If an entire village acts in this way the fine will be 100 rupees; if a household does so, it will be 23 rupees. (LTshognam/Tib/16)

Spontaneous constancy to a policy of solidarity in the face of oppression is never something that can be taken for granted, and subordinate groups customarily adopt coercive measures of various sorts to ensure that their members do not break ranks, and to punish those that do. The preferred method among the Shod yul was by the threat of fines of which the levels were specified for recidivist individuals, households and entire communities. Most important, however, was the oath of secrecy sworn annually by the assembled Shod yul. The procedures for taking this oath are spelled out in the same document:

6. stod nas phyi 'dra smad nas nang 'dra gang 'dra 'byung kyang sgan pa dun du bcug dyab du mi mang phyi skor nang skor byas nas
7. cig chong gnyis chong man pa nga bsted pa'i bcan tshug mi shes nga tsang le bcan btsug mi shes nga gya ga bcan tsug mi shes
8. nga tshug bcan tshug mi shes nga bsteng yed bcan tshug mi shes bzer ba med pa sgan pa na ma rim bzhin gyi bcan tshug la lag rtam
9. mi mang pho thog mo thog tham cad gon pa la mi mang lag rkor kyis stags de rta bu la ka dros 'cham nas phyi rtam nang du man pa nang rtam
10. phi ru kyol yod dam bzer nas sna dyal hor zla 3 pa'i tshe 10 byed rgyu yin

> If outside (i.e. Tibetan?) enemies come from the north, and inside enemies (Nepalese?) come from the south, the headman should be in front, the supervisors behind them, and the populace in an outer and inner circle, and they should act as one. [Each supervisor] should not say "I cannot act as the supervisor of Te" or whatever. The headmen each in turn should grasp the hands of the supervisor; each man and woman offers his or her hand to the headman. Having so united they swear an oath to the effect that they should bear information about the outside to the inside, and should not convey inside information to the outside. This oath shall be sworn on the tenth day of every third Hor month. (*ibid.*)

This injunction to secrecy appears in much the same form in the archives of most of the communities, and was probably universal in Mustang, at least as an oral formulation if not as a written policy. Such a policy of village-level *omertà* still certainly prevails through Mustang in cases of inter-community disputes or criminal investigations by police. In the case of the document under consideration here, there is a sort of double oath: not only must the people of the Shod yul swear an oath of secrecy, but they must *also* swear not to reveal to anyone that they have sworn such an oath at all. An addendum to the document states:

> 11. [...] yul ka lnga po'i rgan pa skags du gsu 'dzom kyang
> 12. kha 1 ce 2 byas nas lab sa med / rgan pa can btsugs yul pa thaṃd (thams cad) gsu na =kya[l] 'dugs zer ba gang byung na / rbun 'drigs chad dngul 25 / dang yul nas byas pa she^r (sher [< shar] tshe) / 'drid chad
> 13. dngul 100 phul phyogs zhus pa /

> If any headman of the five [Shod yul] goes to Kag for a meeting he shall not speak with two tongues in one mouth (i.e. with duplicity); if a headman, supervisor or all the villagers admit that they have sworn this oath there will be a 25-rupee fine for individuals and a fine of 100 rupees for villages. (*ibid.*)

The archive of Te contains half a dozen documents from which it is possible to piece together a protracted dispute in which the five Shod yul, seriously—and illegally—put upon by the King of Lo, were able to coordinate their resistance effectively enough to shake off his oppression. The event is described in some detail (and the relevant documents presented) elsewhere, but the main episodes in the dispute are worth reproducing here.

The apparatus of the central government was not well developed in the peripheral areas of post-unification Nepal, and authority was generally delegated to local elites who had either cooperated with the

Gorkhas during their campaign, or else had been elevated to positions of power by the conquerors. The policy of both the Shah and Rana administrations was to erode the prerogatives of these provincial elites in favour of individuals or structures more directly connected with the country's rulers (Regmi 1972: 29–33). Although the details are not always clear, it appears that the king had been entitled to certain categories of tax and services from the Shod yul (as well as one other community), but that in 1863 the government had abolished these services and declared that the revenues in question should be redirected to the local customs office. The King of Lo did not accept this ruling, and continued to exact what he regarded as his hereditary dues until, in 1900, the Shod yul asked the Rana government to intervene in the matter. The secret documents of the Shod yul—this particular collection is kept in the archive of Te—suggest that the government's confirmation of its earlier position was not readily forthcoming. The enclave engaged certain prominent aristocrats to go to Kathmandu to intercede on their behalf, and this cost money—honoraria for the mediators and fees and bribes for the authorities in the capital—which was secretly raised by collecting payments from all the families on the basis of the numbers of livestock each one possessed. At the same time, the five villages adopted a policy of passive resistance to the king. A royal visit to any of the villages in the past would have meant receiving the royal party at some distance from the settlement, entertaining them with food and drink, leading their horses by the bridle and so on. On 14 March 1910 the Shod yul passed a resolution prohibiting its members from precisely these activities, and specifying fines of 100 rupees and 16 rupees respectively for any community or individual whose nerve might fail. A sort of early warning system was also implemented, whereby any village that had reason to believe a royal party was about to descend on it would send missions to the neighbouring settlements, who would in turn dispatch a delegation to support their beleaguered ally.

The strategy proved successful: the Shod yul's non-cooperation, backed up by a missive from Kathmandu confirming the ineligibility of the services claimed by the king, resulted in liberation from the royal oppressor (Ramble 2008a: 63–70).

CONCLUSION

As a case study in the opposition of public to hidden transcripts the archives of Baragaon are a particularly rich source, since they offer an insight into several degrees of concealment. The manoeuvring of Baragaon as a whole against its noble or contractual chiefs was carried on without the knowledge of the leadership; and Baragaon itself had no inkling of the elaborate scheming of the five Shod yul in pursuit of their own common interest; nor was the King of Lo privy to the strategies the Shod yul had formulated to deprive him of what he regarded as his hereditary rights. But the layers of the onion do not stop there. The Shod yul may have been united against forces that they regarded as their common oppressors, but the archives of the individual settlements contain abundant evidence of strategies that each adopted against one or more of its neighbours in disputes, generally relating to pasture boundaries.[9] These documents were clearly not for the public eye of the Shod yul, who had ceased in these circumstances to be the ally and had become instead the enemy. A policy of openness would have led to the people of Te being deprived of their resources by their neighbours, just as surely as by any king, contractor or duke.

The significance of this last example is that it takes us beyond relations of simple dominance to a confrontation between peers: clearly, hidden transcripts are not the monopoly of a social underclass but are likely, in some form or other, to be a feature of any group that aims to preserve its collective identity in an environment in which its integrity is threatened; and even dominant groups—as Scott rightly points out—need a private space in which they can figuratively mess together and unbuckle the burden of affectations that they must wear if they are to be credible oppressors.

Most of the examples given here do deal with relations between groups of unequal social standing, and in the majority of cases the direction of persecution follows the natural order, so to speak: it is the aristocracy who are bullying their social inferiors—priests and commoners—while the "sub-Commoner" of the Shod yul are being put upon by Commoners in one case and royalty in another. But in relations between members of the Shod yul the impulse to secrecy has nothing to do with the opposition of a weaker group by a more powerful one. It

[9] For examples of such "internal" strategies against neighbouring communities, see Ramble 2008a: chapter 4.

is, rather, the strategic caution of a community that knows it will be endangered by too much openness about its internal affairs.

The "hidden transcripts" of which a few examples have been presented here were made available by the communities that own them because they felt that such revelation no longer carried any risk. There are other documents to which I have been denied access because publication might, it was felt, render the community vulnerable. In the case of the most underprivileged groups in the region it is probable that there are no historical accounts at all, beyond sporadic appearances in the archives of the communities to which they are attached. The hardships we have seen inflicted on the Priests and Commoners in these documents must surely pale in comparison with the cruelties and indignities visited on the region's Blacksmiths and Tailors. A sensitive anthropological enquiry might discover in this community an attitude to their statutory betters that is at odds with the good-humoured acquiescence its members characteristically convey; the success among them of Maoist politicians and Christian missionaries in recent years is evidence enough of unarticulated discontent. Their ascending generations, however, left no written traces because they could not write, and probably had no one trustworthy to write for them; but the documents from other groups seen in this article do suggest that, whatever they may have said and done in public, they are unlikely to have been under the spell of anyone else's social hegemony.

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